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The Italian Epic & Its International Context

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by

Dino S. Cervigni

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Annali d'Italianistica seeks to promote the study of Italian literature in its cultural context, to foster scholarly excellence, and to select topics of interest to a large number of Italianists. Monographic in nature, the journal is receptive to a variety of topics, critical approaches, and theoretical perspectives. Each year's topic is announced well ahead of time, and contributions are welcome. The journal is issued in the fall of each year. Manuscripts should be submitted with a McIntosh or IBM compatible disk and should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Authors should follow the MLA style for articles in English; articles in Italian should conform to the *AdI* style sheet. For all communications concerning contributions, address the Editor, *Annali d'Italianistica*, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3170.

Notes

This section occasionally publishes essays and review articles on topics treated in one of the previous volumes of *Annali d'Italianistica*.

Italian Bookshelf

Italian Bookshelf is edited by Dino S. Cervigni and Massimo Maggiari with the collaboration of Paolo Cherchi, Gustavo Costa, Valeria Finucci, Albert N. Mancini, and John P. Welle. The purpose of *Italian Bookshelf* is to identify, review, and bring to the attention of Italianists recent studies on Italian literature and culture. *Italian Bookshelf* will cover the entire history of Italian literature. *AdI* will review books exclusively on the basis of their scholarly worth. To this purpose, junior and senior colleagues will be invited to collaborate without any consideration to academic affiliation and with an open attitude toward critical approaches. Contributions to this section are solicited. Scholars who intend to contribute are encouraged to contact the editors or one of the section's permanent collaborators. Book reviews, to be submitted with a McIntosh disk, should be sent to: Massimo Maggiari, Languages Department, 66 George Street, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424-0001.

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Travel and Literature

The 1996 issue of *Annali d'Italianistica* will be devoted to the study of travel literature. This "hodoeporic literature" (*l'odeporica*, in Italian) is a classification that represents a neglected, yet important body of texts that arose with the very act of writing at the dawn of history. "He left for a long trip" — we read about the hero of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* — exhausted, prostrated by fatigue, when he returned, he rested and engraved his story on a stone." It is a *corpus* in constant evolution through the centuries, a series of documents that encompass crude examples and works of extraordinary depth. Yet, in spite of its long history, this body of writings seems to defy any attempt of definition according to the traditional literary genres. Documentary texts, biographies and autobiographies, epistolaries and hard-to-define first-person narratives, literature of fiction and hoaxes, imaginary itineraries into the fantastic, the utopia, and the self, works of disappointment versus idealization, search for the exotic versus verification of well-known data: even a cursory examination of this farraginous material raises questions that require complex answers.

Recently, there has been a worldwide stimulus of interest on this topic. In 1980 a center for interdisciplinary studies on the "Viaggio in Italia" was founded in Moncalieri, Turin (CIRVI). CIRVI has been publishing a biannual journal and issued more than fifty book-length studies on previously unpublished hodoeporic texts, travelers of various nations and diverse interests, as well as proceedings of international conferences and symposia. Throughout the Eighties, on both sides of the Atlantic, additional publishers have offered the reader a wealth of works in this area: newly discovered *récits de voyage*, bibliographies, studies of analytical micro-history and theoretical essays on narratology and specific literary codes, critical works on the relationship between travel literature and literature *tout court*, economics, esthetic sensitivity, and feminism.

In planning this issue of *Annali d'Italianistica*, the Editors seek to explore some of the hodoeporic literature's most important themes. We are not so much interested in the anecdotal as much as in broad essays of formal analysis, diachronic studies of the genre along more traditional periodizations, the *Grand Tour* and the history of ideas. The only limit set to the exploration of this complex cultural phenomenon is that the essays study a relationship with Italy, her people, language, institutions. Our approach to the hodoeporics, intrinsically interdisciplinary, is very promising. We trust that our readers will enjoy it.

For this special issue, the Editors are inviting contributions from distinguished international scholars, as well as their younger colleagues, on this wide range of topics. Prospective contributors may contact either editor.

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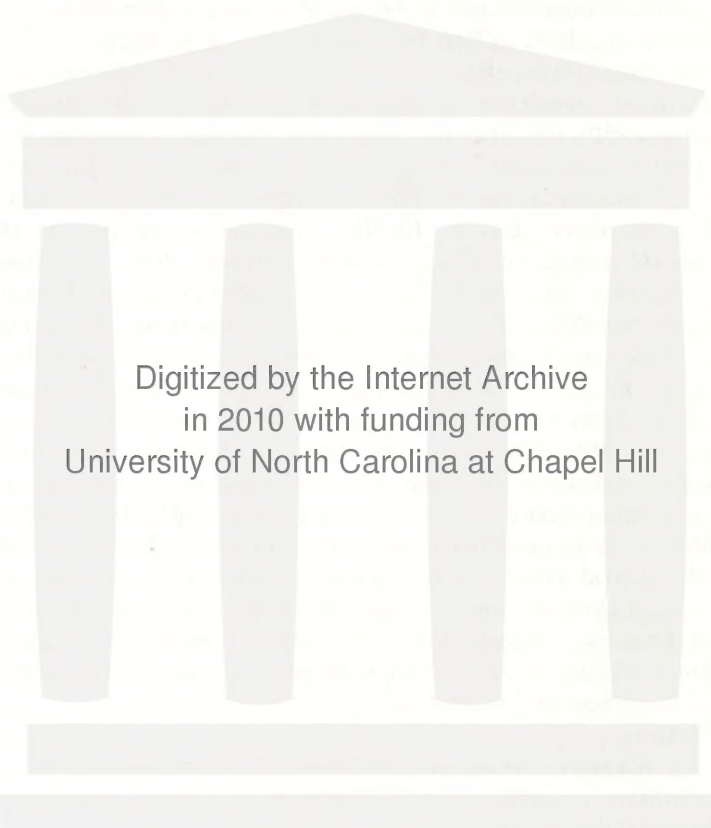
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Brief Notices

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The Italian Epic & Its European Context: An Introduction

Annali d'italianistica's first volume, which appeared in 1983, was devoted to Boiardo (1441-94) and Pulci (1432-84) in commemoration of the fifth centenary of the publication of the *Orlando innamorato* (first lost edition, 1483-84) and the *Morgante* (1483). In its twelfth year of publishing *Annali d'italianistica* returns to a broader perspective on the same topic: the Italian epic and its European context. Accordingly, in welcoming contributions from scholars with different approaches, I have been particularly interested in studies exploring the Italian epic from a perspective that is not only historical and open to contemporary theory but also attentive to the Italian epic's multiple interactions with its European developments.

Announcing this issue in 1992, I proposed that *AdI* 1994 should take stock of the many and diverse studies that have appeared on the epic during the last decade. Through the three bibliographical essays on Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto as well as the ten interpretive essays, which range from Boccaccio and Chaucer to Tasso and Moderata Fonte, this volume's contributors focus on some of the epic's most debated issues: from intertextuality and hermeneutics to socio-historical issues and gender theory.

Edoardo Lebano's bibliographical review of a decade of studies on Pulci is not only exhaustive in its treatment but also indicative of current critical interests and trends. In addition to the *Morgante's* two reprints (Fatini; De Robertis) and two new editions (Puccini; Dego), Lebano's essay documents the much awaited publication of Pulci's *Opere minori* by Paolo Orvieto. Lebano also reviews the four book-length studies published during the past decade (Carrai; Gareffi; Jordan; Ankli), which, together with the more than thirty essays that have appeared during the same time, point up the current critical interests and trends in Pulci studies, ranging from historical interests to hermeneutics and gender issues. Lebano emphasizes the importance of Paolo Orvieto's essay "Sul rapporto *Morgante-Orlando* Laurenziano," which overturns Rajna's thesis by demonstrating that *Orlando laurenziano* did indeed derive from the *Morgante* and not vice versa.

Mauda Bregoli-Russo's "Rassegna della bibliografia boiardesca: 1983-1994" reviews 132 studies and identifies the past decade's major trends in Boiardo studies: philological approaches, which make indispensable the much awaited new edition of the *Innamoramento de Orlando* (the only documented title of Boiardo's masterpiece) by Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti and Cristina Montagnani; research tools, such as the publication of bibliographies (N. Harris), a concordance and *rimario* (David Robey and Marco Dorigatti); stylistic approaches; and studies focusing on both intratextuality and intertextuality.

Finally, Bregoli-Russo laments the absence of comprehensive analyses of Boiardo's *oeuvre* capable of suggesting critical directions to pursue in the future, and wishes greater collaboration among Boiardo scholars.

Robert J. Rodini's "Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism: 1986-1993" continues previous work: his *Ludovico Ariosto: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1956-1980* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1984), in cooperation with Salvatore Di Maria, his "Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism, 1980-87" (*MLN* 103 [1988]: 187-203), and additional bibliographies by other scholars in North America and Italy (Cavallo; Beer; Casadei; Cordié; Franceschetti; Looney). The most studied of all Renaissance epic poets, Ariosto has been the subject of a book-length study in North America each year since 1986. These books, together with a myriad of essays, indicate several major areas of critical concerns, which Rodini, in conjunction with Cavallo (1993), summarizes as follows: "Ariosto and allegory; intertextuality; studies on the *Furioso's* characters; and Ariosto in a socio-historical context." To these Rodini adds studies on patronage as well as, particularly in America, on feminist and gender issues.

Taking the reader from the most probable inventor of the romance epic's common metric form (the ottava stanza) to Trecento and Quattrocento epics to Ariosto and Tasso, the volume's ten critical essays illustrate major critical trends in epic studies, bear on fundamental critical issues, and situate the Italian epic within an international debate.

William Anderson's "The Italian Background to Chaucer's Epic Similes" is a study of both intra- and intertextuality, although the author never employs such terms. Discussing the literary history of Chaucer's extended similes, Anderson defines them as acts of imitation from the Latin *stilus altus*. Anderson argues that the simple account of their history, tracing their sources to "Dante and to Boccaccio, who copied Dante," is misleading in two ways: It ignores the importance of the Latin model common to Italian and English poets, and it obscures the brilliant variety of experimentation with that model in Italian poetry after Dante. The essay's first section sketches an outline of critical attitudes toward the extended simile, with emphasis on the descriptive terms of the *Ad Herennium* as these were received in the Italian schools. The continuing importance of the classical model is then illustrated by Statius's "Qualis Gaetulae . . . ad confraga / silvae venator" and its reappearance in Boccaccio's *Teseida* and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*. The essay's second section concerns the variety and the intellectual demanding character of similes in the vernacular works of Boccaccio and Petrarch. The essay's third section examines the similes of Chaucer's *Troilus* against this broad background in order to identify the major lines of influence and to characterize Chaucer's distinctive handling of this rhetorical figure. Although Anderson's analysis, which focuses primarily on Boccaccio and Chaucer but takes the reader also to Dante and to Latin antiquity, does not look ahead past Chaucer's age, its main thrust on intra- and intertextuality, national and international contexts, cannot but have a major

import on studies that seek to situate the epic, as Anderson suggests, “in the full context of classical and rhetoric in Italian literary tradition.”

In the next essay Juliann Vitullo employs an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account anthropology and socio-history, hermeneutics and gender studies. In “Contained Conflict: Wild men and Warrior Women in the Early Italian Epic,” Juliann Vitullo problematizes the representation of marginalized groups in the early Italian epic. A long critical tradition has interpreted the Italian Carolingian epics of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance as “bourgeois” rewritings of a French aristocratic tradition. For some scholars such an evaluation led to the dismissal of the Italian epics as vulgar copies of a previous aristocratic genre; for others, however, it brought about the celebration of a new democratization that the Italian chivalric epics seemed to embody because they arguably broke down the traditional class hierarchies of Old French *chansons de geste*. Vitullo’s study attempts to question such a dichotomy between “feudal” and “bourgeois” chivalric epics by analyzing how Italian communal writers questioned certain aspects of the genre while appropriating other elements to support the new urban power structures. A source of evidence for the notion of the Italian chivalric epic as a more democratic literary expression resides in the appearance of non-European peoples, workers, and women as virtuous and courageous protagonists in the texts. In problematizing the goal of representing such marginalized groups, Vitullo concludes that such narrative strategies were not always completely successful. She also points out that women writers of the following generations felt empowered by the literary representations of the *virago*, although they often adopted the strategies of containment the male epic writers had also used “to limit the threat posed by the warrior woman.”

After going with Anderson from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, and with Vitullo from the Middle Ages to the Quattrocento, readers now move into the high Renaissance epic with Elizabeth J. Bellamy’s essay: “Alcina’s Revenge: Reassessing Irony and Allegory in the *Orlando furioso*.” Bellamy’s point of departure is the Renaissance proclamation of the *Furioso* as a classic. For Bellamy the effort to “proclaim” the *Orlando furioso* not just as a classic but a properly “European” classic mostly centers on allegory — that is, the need by Ariosto’s commentators to make the poem properly allegorical. Bellamy, however, argues that much of the *Furioso*’s allegorical commentary exists as a kind of disavowal of Ariosto’s inherent *ingegno*, his wit, or, phrased more rhetorically, his irony. Thus she proposes a return to the *Furioso*’s oft-interpreted episode of Alcina and Logistilla as the poem’s most complex encounter between the conflicting impulses of irony and allegory. The real underlying anxiety for Logistillan allegory — Bellamy points out — resides not so much in viewing Alcina as a monstrous woman corrupting the fantasy of male purity, but rather in her “corrupt” matter (the locus of the episode’s irony), which may not contain a sufficiently transcendent or allegorical meaning. For

Bellamy, therefore, Alcina “(ironically) serves as the powerful agent of a destructive allegory. . . .”

Focusing, like Bellamy, on the *Furioso*, David Quint, in “The Death of Brandimarte and the Ending of the *Orlando furioso*,” goes far beyond the analysis of the death of Brandimarte, the only major Christian hero to die among all the paladins Ariosto inherits from Boiardo. Through internal parallels and intertextual allusions — most prominently to Pulci’s *Morgante* — Ariosto makes the dying Brandimarte a narrative surrogate for both of his poem’s twin heroes, Ruggiero and Orlando, whose deaths are fated but are not depicted in the *Furioso*. The death that is here displaced onto Brandimarte may thus be the true goal and significance of the “epic” closure of the *Furioso*. Accordingly, even though the *Furioso*, through political triumph and Christendom’s perpetuation as well as the foundation of the Este lineage and Ruggiero’s conversion, projects “meaning beyond the individual death,” Quint is nevertheless ready to propose that Brandimarte’s death in the *Furioso* responds “to the more universal sense of ending that is human mortality itself.” Thus this death may also qualify the *Furioso*’s “achieved ending, and perhaps all epic endings, as premature and provisional,” thus anticipating and suggesting “the logic of its dark sequel,” the *Cinque canti*.

Moving between intertextuality and socio-historical issues, courtiership and the role of the poet, the essay by Ronald L. Martinez, “De-Cephalizing Rinaldo: The Money of Tyranny in Niccolò da Correggio’s *Fabula de Cefalo* and *Orlando furioso* 42-43,” offers a unified reading of Ariosto’s long and complex episodes of Rinaldo, which concluded the 1516 version of the *Orlando furioso*. Martinez organizes his reading around Ariosto’s elaborate imitation of plot elements from the *Fabula de Cefalo* of Niccolò da Correggio in the two *novelle* told to Rinaldo in cantos 42 and 43. This imitation, Martinez suggests, is invested with a peculiar intensity because of two contexts framing the tales: Ariosto’s own secret relationship to Alessandra Benucci (represented, though unnamed, in canto 42) and the poet’s vexed relationship, as a courtier, to the Este dukes. Martinez goes on to argue that in such a frame the two accounts of how wives are seduced by money become a parable of the economic power of tyranny (classically understood) over its subjects. Ariosto’s transformation of da Correggio’s play in itself signals a change in the condition of courtiership between the late Quattrocento and the second decade of the Cinquecento, and thus points to a new role for the poet.

Paramount in Anderson’s article and present in most of the other essays as well, comparative analysis occupies center stage in Patrick J. Cook’s “The Epic Chronotope from Ariosto to Spenser.” According to Cook, Ariosto revived epic as a form responsive to Renaissance culture by systematically deploying Virgil’s generic structures derived from medieval romance. This mixture of forms allowed Ariosto at once to celebrate human aspiration to knowledge and power and to dramatize the epistemological difficulties this aspiration inevitably produces and

encounters. In adapting Ariosto's method to the Reformed culture of Elizabethan England, Spenser confronted new resistances to the imperial ideology implicit in the epic genre. In the first book of his *Faerie Queene*, Spenser pushes Ariosto's method to a new extreme, dramatizing the difficulties of conduct in an even more decentered world characterized by perplexing multiplicity and insufficient points of reference. Cook's essay runs counter to prevailing views on the two authors by portraying an Ariosto relatively less skeptical, a Spenser relatively more focused upon epistemological impasse, and an intertextual relationship between the two authors that is more intricately detailed.

Also developing a comparative analysis, Lawrence Rhu's essay, "Political Decorum in Spenser's Imitations of *Orlando furioso*," examines Edmund Spenser's imitation of *Orlando furioso* in *The Faerie Queene* by discussing not only their sources in the Italian original but also their oft-announced destination, Queen Elizabeth, as both dedicatee and anticipated reader of this English epic romance. Decorous transformations of Ariostan irreverence are thus to be expected, and Rhu naturally focuses upon female figures and concerns of gender and power. But such transactions between the Italian poet and his English heir by no means enact predictable routines. Rather, they invite detailed scrutiny that complicates formulaic reductions and helps to reveal particular circumstances of Spenserian composition as well as willful ambiguities that sometimes obscure this poet's intentions. Comparison with John Harington's Tudor translations especially helps to illuminate the Elizabethan fortunes of Spenser's main Italian model, which, by the end of the sixteenth century, had undergone a series of moralizations that put *The Faerie Queene*'s allegorical didacticism in telling perspective.

The next two essays deal with Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, focusing on two different aspects of the epic.

Albert Ascoli, "In Liberating the Tomb: Difference and Death in *Gerusalemme liberata*," builds on the fundamental work of Sergio Zatti concerning the problem of difference in Tasso's epic, as well as on important treatments, by Fredi Chiappelli and Timothy Hampton, of the intertwined Tassian themes of the tomb and the vow, to construct a symptomatic reading of the last two lines of the *Liberata*. Ascoli's essay constitutes a gloss on the "quest for the Sepulchre" that shapes the *Liberata*'s narrative from beginning to end, and locates the poem within an epic "poetics of death" that stretches from Homer and Virgil, through Dante and Ariosto, and hence to Tasso — a theme David Quint also analyzes in his essay. Finally, the essay explores the tension between, on the one hand, the rigorously typological significance of that quest and that poetics as it appears in the tale of Goffredo and his *compagni erranti*, and, on the other, their ambivalence and instability when applied to the "metapoetic" experience of the author, whose narrative vow leads him, like his protagonist, onward toward the vacancy of the tomb.

In "Tasso and the Witches," Walter Stephens argues that the exordium of

Gerusalemme liberata and the dialogue *Il messaggiero* expose the cosmological, ontological, and epistemological anxieties behind the most bizarre and degrading element of the witchcraft mythos developed by early modern literate culture: the notion that witches copulated with devils. For Stephens this misogynistic fantasy was not simply a curious sidelight but rather the unacknowledged core of the literate witch-mythos. Orthodox Christian ontology, as inherited from the Scholastics, needed to posit the copulation of witches and devils in order to assert that the scale of being was both complete and gradual. Unless this notion were true, there was no guarantee of ontological continuity between humanity and divinity. In fact, to the rationalistic mentality that had evolved in the late Middle Ages, the Incarnation no longer appeared an adequate guarantee of human access to the divine, for it depended upon paradox rather than transition. Tasso shows that the deep metaphysical rationale of literate witch-hunters was not “cherchez la femme,” but rather “cherchez le diable.”

In “La scrittura epico-cavalleresca al femminile: Moderata Fonte e *Tredici canti del Floridano*,” Valeria Finucci concludes the volume’s critical essays by chartering a totally new literary tradition, that of chivalric romances by women, and focusing on the genre’s likely best example: Moderata Fonte’s *Tredici cantari del Floridoro* (1581). Finucci’s essay runs counter to a common assumption that early modern women writers had mostly written Petrarchan love poetry, a genre easier to imitate technically, presumably more “in tune” with women’s emotional life, and also easier to publish because of its brevity. During the last few years, however, critics have begun to unearth women’s output in other genres, such as treatises (e.g., Moderata Fonte’s *Il merito delle donne*) and dramas (i.e., Beatrice del Sera’s conventual representations). Finucci’s assumption can thus be summarized: In a century when it had become somewhat easier to become literate and publish, it should have made sense for women to write in the most popular and imitated genre, chivalric romance, even though its emphasis on knights, tournaments, and empires’ formation must have been rather removed from female sensitivity. Such literary activity by women, if there had ever been one, has hardly reached us, has mostly become lost, or is still to be discovered. By examining library catalogues, *fondi antichi*, and the output of publishing houses, Finucci has succeeded in unearthing a good number of chivalric romances by women. Furthermore, and perhaps even more importantly, Finucci’s essay seeks to demonstrate that it pays off to reread the whole tradition of chivalric romances in light of the changes a woman is likely to bring to the genre, whatever the critic’s assessment of her work may be. By focusing on Moderata Fonte’s *Tredici canti del Floridoro*, Finucci does much more than examine an unfinished work or the epic’s value *per se*. In fact she seeks to unravel Fonte’s complex negotiations between the epic’s prevailing literary tradition and her femininity: on the one hand, the need to imitate the genre’s tradition, and specifically Ariosto, a *sine qua non* for publication and poetic success; and on the other, her female awareness that women can hardly share

man's pleasure in writing or reading about lady warriors being slaughtered, damsels-in-distress being raped, or the Oedipal struggles that are at the heart of the genre as it developed in Europe.

In synthesis, *AdI* 1994's ten critical and three bibliographical essays fully accomplish the goals this volume set out to pursue: to take stock of the many and diverse studies on the epic that have appeared during the last decade; to test some of the critical ideas, both old and new, that are at the basis of most current studies on the epic; to charter a recently discovered literary tradition: chivalric romances by women; and to pay close attention to the Italian epic's multiple interactions with its European developments, an attention that justifies the volume's title.

For the thirteen excellent contributions to this twelfth volume of *Annali d'italianistica* and the scores of book reviews, I am grateful to the journal's contributors. They, and all previous collaborators, should be praised for their valuable contribution to scholarship throughout *AdI*'s twelve years of sustained effort to serve its international readership and foster Italian studies in North America in close collaboration with scholars overseas.

The Italian Background to Chaucer's Epic Similes

Galfridus Chaucer vates et fama poesis
materne

Stephanus de Surigone

Geffrey Chaucier
which in oure volgare had nevere ys pere
of eloquencyale Retorryke

John Shirley

The noble Rethor poete of grete bretayne
colophon, BL Harley 7333

I. Rhetoric is the oldest topic in Chaucerian criticism even though Chaucer did not leave a treatise on “vernacular eloquence” that might have encouraged it. The subject is very prominent in the early English reception. References to style and especially to the high style appear throughout the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writings on Chaucer, some of which, like the citations above, take it as the single distinguishing characteristic of the poet and speak of little or nothing else. The usual formulation refers to his introduction of rhetorical “flowers” or “ornaments”; he was the “first foundeur and embellisher of ornate eloquence in our englissh,” as Caxton put it in his epilogue to Chaucer’s *Boece*.¹ These terms come from Latin, school tradition, and the writers to which Chaucer is compared are typically classical Latin poets. A good example is to be found in the “Epitaphium” written by Stefano di Surigone, an Italian humanist who taught at Oxford in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. It praises Chaucer as the equal of Vergil because he brought similar fame to his native language. A century later Barnaby Googe used the early epic poet Ennius as a point of comparison, probably because of changes in the English language that had made Chaucer’s verses seem old-fashioned.²

¹ For John Shirley’s verses of ca. 1450, Spurgeon 49. The anonymous verses appearing as a colophon to the *Parliament of Fowles* in Harleian 7333 date to ca. 1450 (Spurgeon 53). They recall Lydgate, *Life of our Lady* ll. 1400 ff. For Caxton, see Brewer 75 and compare, *inter alia*, *The Book of Courtesye* (1477): “O fader and founder of ornate eloquence / That enlunemed hast alle our bretayne,” which looks back to Chaucer’s description of Petrarch in the *Clerk’s Tale*.

² The topic appears as early as the late fourteenth century, with Deschamps comparing Chaucer to four ancient writers, three of them Roman (and as a poet specifically to Ovid: “Ovides grans en ta

In contrast, modern literary history identifies the sources of Chaucer's vernacular rhetoric in other medieval vernacular literatures. An early example is W. P. Ker, who described the background to Chaucer's extended similes. Because this rhetorical figure is so closely associated with the high style, Ker's remarks may well be set against the general remarks about rhetorical ornamentation in the early criticism.

Dante was the first poet to imitate in a modern language the classical use of simile. Chaucer is the first English poet to use the epic simile and he seems to have taken the suggestion not from Vergil and Ovid but from Dante and from Boccaccio, who copied Dante.

(Ker 69)

Chaucer's sources and inspiration were vernacular, in this case exclusively Italian. "He [took] the suggestion not from Vergil and Ovid" directly, but from "Dante and from Boccaccio, who copied Dante."

Both of these views have notable limitations. Neither the classical antecedents nor Dante, when named alone, will describe adequately the real background to Chaucer's extended similes. Ker's main point is well taken; there is no doubt that Chaucer, while composing the *Troilus* and *Knight's Tale*, worked from Italian texts. Later studies such as those of J. A. W. Bennett and his school, with a focus on the comparison of Chaucer's writings with their Italian sources, have demonstrated how thoroughly the English poet knew these works. But there is more to the Italian background than this approach will reveal. Tracing a simple line of descent from Dante through "Boccaccio, who copied Dante" obscures the brilliant variety of experimentation in Boccaccio and in other Trecento writers and ignores the Latin models behind those experiments. Boccaccio, like Dante before him, worked with a critical model of the rhetorical form as well as literary examples of it. Chaucer clearly learned to do so as well. His similes are not translations from the Italian, they are new compositions. The early descriptions of Chaucer's rhetoric, formulated in close proximity to his literary culture and reflecting something of his own understanding of the topic, acknowledge this by pointing to the classical Latin background. Moreover, the

poetere". Stephanus de Surigone, from Brewer 77-78; cf. Spurgeon 59-60:

..... est docti musa Maronis
qua didicit melius lingua latini loqui
grande novumque decus Chaucer, famamque paravit
heu quantum fuerat prisca britanna rudis
reddidit insignem maternis versibus, ut iam
aurea splendescat, ferrea facta prius.

Barnaby Googe, from Brewer 106-07: "For since the time of our excellent countreyman Sir Geffray Chaucer who liveth in like estimation with vs as did olde Ennius wyth the Latines, there hath flourished in England so fine and filed phrases, and so good and pleasant Poets as may countervayle the doings of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, etc."

history of the extended simile in the Trecento, like that of other classical figures of speech, was closely tied to the general question of the *volgarizzamento* or the reproposal of ideas and literary forms of the learned Latin tradition in the vernacular. The early English criticism of Chaucer effectively repeats this poetic of vernacularization.

Something of the relevant history in rhetorical theory became apparent in 1924 with Edmond Faral's *Les arts poétiques du xii^e et du xiii^e siècle*. Faral described the tendency of these treatises to disparage figures of comparison as means for augmentation or description (68-70). Matthew of Vendome doubted the usefulness of the simile in its short and, especially, its long form, arguing that the ancients had used it to compensate for the intellectual poverty of their subjects. Christian writers need not encumber their greater themes with such ornaments. Eberhard repeated this argument; and although Geoffrey of Vinsauf, the most influential of the writers on the poetical arts, is slightly less harsh, he clearly prefers the short to the extended comparison. Faral then argued for a correlation between this prescriptive tradition and the use of formal similes in the poetry of this period, both Latin and French; the case proves more convincing with the vernacular poets.³ In the poetry of this period from Chrétien de Troyes on, one finds many examples of the short comparison, but the extended comparison (simile *per collationem*) falls into great disfavor from the eleventh century on:⁴

On ne saisit pas bien les raisons pour lesquelles le goût s'est transformé [after 1200]. Toujours est-il que la comparaison n'apparaît plus qu'exceptionnellement dans les chansons de geste, de même que dans tous les autres genres littéraires. Dans les remaniements de sujets antiques, l'*Eneas*, le *Roman de Troie* . . . les adaptateurs la suppriment partout où leur modèle s'en est servi.

(Faral 70)

What Faral is suggesting is that practice was influenced by the prescriptive disapproval articulated in the treatises. And this is very interesting in the context of the Chaucerian simile and its history, for it was preeminently in their narratives "of antiquity" that Boccaccio and then Chaucer used this rhetorical figure.

In effect, *Les arts poétiques* forces us to ask whether the similes in Dante and Boccaccio, cited by Ker as Chaucer's models, and the general burst of interest

³ The formal simile is hardly unknown in 12th century literature (Knapp; Schmidt). Ratkowitsch remarks the cultivation of ekphrasis in 12th century Latin poetry.

⁴ The reservations extended to contemporary commentary on classical epic, e.g. Bernardus Silvestris *In Aen.* 6.48, "Intelligentia enim rethoricorum colorum ornatum non quaerit, cum naturalem habeat pulchritudinem" (ed. Jones and Jones 43); an attitude perhaps to be taken in the context of Bernardus's defense of a philosophical poetry against the rhetorical mannerism of the contemporary Loire poets (Godman 594).

in the form during the Trecento, did not have a theoretical background as well. Something more of this background has become apparent now in the light of investigations of the arts courses in the medieval Italian universities. This work has for the most part been done in Italy, and it would only be appropriate to mention the name Giuseppe Billanovich as one of its prime movers. In general, one can say that the teaching of rhetoric in Italy was carried out on very different texts than in the north, and these by comparison to the *artes poeticae* entailed a distinctive revaluation of the classical *stilus altus*. Recent research has clarified the sequence of events that led to the appearance of classical descriptions of the high style in that influential tradition and in the rhetorics and poetics of vernacular writing that followed them. In this context, the burst of experimentation with similes in the Italian Trecento appears to be a manifestation of a new vernacular poetic as well as an indication of Dante's unique genius and influence.

In Italy the study of rhetoric in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was characterized by the treatises on the *artes dictaminis*, written for courses at the universities.⁵ At the beginning of this genre stands the treatise on good letter writing, the earliest known example of which is eleventh century and from the monastic school at Montecassino. Into its scheme of precepts and examples for the parts of a letter, teachers of the *artes* soon introduced rules for verbal expression in general, drawn from Cicero's *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. By the early thirteenth century, several influential treatises had been compiled by authors associated with the university of Bologna: the *Quadriga* of Arseginio, the *Boncompagnus* and *Rethorica novissima* of Boncompagno da Signa, the *Candelabrum* of Bene da Firenze, and the *Summa dictaminis* of Guido Faba, all containing extensive discussions of eloquence in writing and speaking. The affluence of Ciceronian rhetoric into the university curriculum was then clearly related to developments in the chanceries at the major Italian courts. The Roman curia adopted the *high style* for its correspondence from the pontificate of Innocent III on, a circumstance that is explicitly noted by Bene da Firenze (Bruni, "L'*ars dictandi*" 172). Pier della Vigna, after taking a degree in law at Bologna and perhaps influenced by the example of the papal government as well, introduced the high style into the chancery of Frederick II.

These developments in curriculum and chanceries were mature by the middle of the thirteenth century. The emphasis on classical rhetorical models for the high style was then augmented in the *artes* curriculum by the addition of the study of classical authors: in Bologna at least from the time of Giovanni del Virgilio early in the fourteenth century. As a student of Boccaccio's and

⁵ For overviews see Alessio; Bruni, "L'*ars dictandi*" (with extensive bibliography, 202-08). The northern treatises on the art of poetry circulated in Italy but were not much cultivated at the Italian universities. An exception is the commentary on Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria nova* by Pace da Ferrara; for bibliography see Stadter 149 ff.

Petrarch's age would have known it, the *artes* course began with Latin grammar, went on to the *artes dictaminis* texts, and was rounded out by the *lectiones*, or public reading and commentary, of the *auctores*, typically of a classical poet such as Vergil, Ovid, Lucan or Statius.

This is undoubtedly the important generation for Chaucer, who encountered the intellectual landscape in Italy on his Italian journeys of the 1370s. Active before the middle of the fourteenth century, it knew the *artes* curriculum in its mature form, with the increased prominence of the *lectiones ad auctores* and was itself responsible, through the Petrarchan circle, for beginning the transition to a humanistic theory of composition that privileged direct imitation of classical poetry over discursive precept. Most important, it had seen the extension of the *artes* treatises to the vernacular and had written in the vernacular in the high style. The first Italian version of the *Ad Herennium*, known as the *Fiore di rettorica*, is attributable to Bono Giamboni and probably dates around 1260. Almost contemporary is Brunetto Latini's *Rettorica*, based on the opening chapters of Cicero's *De inventione*. Latini's *Tresor*, written in French but soon translated into Italian, includes great amounts of classical rhetorical material as well as models for public address and for letter writing. And the second book of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, written in Latin by Brunetto's great student ca. 1304, proposes a comprehensive rhetoric for vernacular prose and poetry.⁶ One of Dante's main theoretical contentions is that the vernacular can match the full range of subjects and styles in Latin literature. And among the three levels of style (*humilis*, *medius*, *sublimus* or *tragicus*) only the highest is suitable for the most important subjects. To this *gravitas sententiae* (profundity of thought) must correspond a *superbia carminum* (magnificence of the verses), a *constructionis elatio* (dignity of construction) and an *excellencia vocabulorum* (excellence of vocabulary), that is, a vernacular equivalent of the high style of Latin epic and tragedy.

A correspondence between theory and practice of the sort surmised by Faral existed in Italy also, this time with a positive bias. The inventive variety of similes one encounters in Trecento Italian literature was underwritten by contemporary theory and criticism. The Italian tradition not only differed from the northern *artes poeticae* as regards the ornaments of the high style; it had also developed a distinctive rhetoric of vernacular composition. There was commerce between the Ciceronian descriptive literature and the classicizing aspects of vernacular writing that had one manifestation in the burst of experiments with similes. Although it is difficult to sort out the reciprocal influences, study of the classical poets, the rhetorical treatises, and vernacular imitation all proceeded together.

Going back to Ker, one can now sensibly modify the thesis that the

⁶ Wieruszowski; Buck; Folena; Bruni, "Semantica." On the influence of Brunetto Latini's rhetoric in England, Copeland.

reappearance of classical similes be traced straight to Dante's genial encounter with classical poetry. The similes in the *Commedia* certainly had their influence. But it is important to see that a well-articulated model of the rhetorical form existed as well, and was also influential. Boccaccio and other writers of his generation did not copy Dante; they imitated this form as they knew it from Latin tradition.

The great variety in Trecento similes is itself anticipated by this rhetorical tradition. The *Ad Herennium* clearly understands the aims of comparison to extend beyond descriptive vividness, and it proposes a range of possible types for the second term or *res similis*, for example an *imago*, an *exemplum*, an *effictio*. The *imago* is the typical comparison of one image with another, implying a certain resemblance between them. The *exemplum* gives a point of comparison that is narrative, historical or legendary:

Exemplum est alicuius facti aut dicti praeteriti cum certi auctoris nomine propositio.
(Exemplification is the citing of something done or said in the past, along with the definite naming of the doer or author.)
(*Ad Herennium* 4.49)

Boccaccio uses the term in his *Esposizioni* when describing the second term of Dante's simile at *Inferno* 15.5:

E, acciò che egli dea più piena notizia di questi argini, per due essempli dimostra la lor qualità, primieramente dicendo: Quale i Fiamminghi tra Guizante e Bruggia . . . Appresso dimostra l'autore per lo secondo essemplum, la qualità degli argini del detto fiumicello, dicendo: E qual i Padovan lungo la Brenta.
(*Esposizioni* 666)

With *effictio* the term of comparison depicts something clearly enough for recognition but without naming the actors. We shall come shortly to Boccaccio's characteristic development of this narrative kind of comparison. And again, the appearance of so many different function words and structures in the Trecento similes goes back to something more than a concern for elegant variation. The idea of the *applicatio* or *adaptatio* from the rhetorical treatises is the underlying cause. The *Ad Herennium* stresses the importance of a precise application, usually through an explicit clause likening the *res similis* (the second term) to what it describes (the first term):

In similibus observare oportet diligenter ut, cum rem adferamus similem cuius rei causa similitudinem adtulerimus, verba ad similitudinem habeamus adcommodata.
(In comparisons we must carefully see to it that when we present the corresponding idea for the sake of which we have introduced the figure we use words suited to the likeness.)
(*Ad Herennium* 4.48)

The same terms are found in commentaries on the classical poets. One example of this will have to suffice in the present circumstances. A commentary on the *Thebaid* that Boccaccio possessed and used during the 1340s does not comment extensively on rhetorical forms, but it consistently remarks instances of the extended comparison, as in these glosses on *Thebaid* 1.370 ff. In the narrative, Polynices has wandered from Thebes to a wood near Argos when a storm comes up. With a nod at the first extended simile in the *Aeneid*, Statius here compares Polynices to a sailor:

polinice[m] naute *comparat* qui in maris tempestate deprehenditur . . . *adaptat* comparationem. . . .⁷

Boccaccio in the *Esposizioni* assumes the same general structure. A simile is a *comparatio*; it involves a second term or *res similis* distinguished in several types, which is described at some length. And it is completed with the *applicatio*:

E questo è ciò che l'autore in questa *comparazione* vuol dimostrare. E poi, *per compiere* la comparazion, segue. . . .
(emphasis mine)

The influence of this model and this terminology is apparent in Boccaccio's explicit statements of comparison, which are often meticulously precise. A good example of the care with which he applies the second term to the first, in order to "complete" a comparison, will be observed in the simile from his *Teseida* discussed here below. And in this instance we can see Chaucer taking equal care to change the application when he adapts the simile to a different context. But the importance of the model is also evident in Boccaccio's different kinds of implicit comparison, including the extension of an application beyond the stated *tertium comparationis*. Some examples of these are also discussed further below. Before examining them, however, it is useful to note that implicit comparison was amply documented in the rhetorical literature of Boccaccio's time. The following definition from the *Trattatello di colori rettorici* will serve as a representative example. The *Trattatello* is an anonymous treatise, probably written in Florence in 1329. It adds contemporary illustrations to a series of rhetorical colors, or figures of speech, whose definitions the author has drawn from the *Ad Herennium*:

Consimilitudine questo colore si conosce quando tu di una similitudine non compiuta senza adattalla al proposito. Esemplo: se Arezzo fosse assediato e mandasse per

⁷ Emphasis mine. I quote the commentary from Berlin: Staatsbibliothek SPK MS lat. fol. 34, f.90^{ra}. *Esposizioni* 16 litt. 9 (ed. Padoan 689). Other examples of Boccaccio's use of this commentary in my forthcoming study, "Boccaccio's Glosses on Statius."

soccorso a Pisa, e ll'aringatore di Pisa si levasse e dicesse, "Signori pisani, io intendo che nulla bestia è sì umile come il lupo quand'elli si sente legato" per questo apare che l'aringatore abbi l'animo grosso verso gli Aretini.
(253-54)

Such intellectually demanding, implicit extension of the comparison is characteristic of the longer similes in Dante's *Commedia* and was developed in a somewhat different way by Boccaccio in the learned *exempla* of the *Comedia delle ninfe* and *Teseida*.

Yet another of the developments characteristic of Boccaccio's art finds a corresponding description in his Latin models. The *Ad Herennium* includes among the uses of comparison the provoking of laughter:

Si defessi erunt audiendo, ab aliqua re quae risum movere possit, ab apologo, fabula verisimili . . . similitudine, novitate, historia. . . .

(If the audience has been tired by a previous speaker, begin with something that makes them laugh, a tale or fable . . . a comparison or anecdote. . . .)

(*Ad Herennium* 1.6.10)

It notes also that hyperbole is often achieved through comparison (4.33), in a passage that effectively defines the humorously complicated simile beginning at *Teseida* 8.3-4. The first term is the noise at the beginning of the tournament, which is so loud that the poet professes to be unable to find an appropriate term of comparison. He tries the storm breaking around the mariner (with a glance at the great similes of *Aeneid* 1 and *Thebaid* 1); he tries the largest battle of the Roman civil wars (with a clear allusion to the *Pharsalia*); he tries adding up earthquakes and volcanoes, and then gives up by making a flamboyant appeal to the reader:

. omai chente fu quello
pensil ciascun che ha fior d'intelletto;
forse che 'l sentirà qual io ho detto,
(*Teseida* 8.4.6-8)⁸

The performance is recognizably Boccaccian. Dante would never have written it. And although Chaucer did not try a formal simile with this degree of hyperbole, Boccaccio's humorous use of exaggeration, and his amused distance from the rhetorical form he has employed, were clearly influential in the development of Chaucer's art.

⁸ Another is *Teseida* 6.53-54, where Boccaccio offers an extended simile with the *exemplum* of Camilla as the second term. He later noted its source in the *Aeneid* as instance of hyperbole: [iperbole] "come fa Virgilio, che, per manifestare la leggiereza della Camilla, dice che ella sarebbe corsa sopra l'onde del mare turbato e non s'arebbe immollate le piante de' piedi" (*Esposizioni* 1. litt. 1, ed. Padoan 23).

My point is that a well-articulated, descriptive model for similes stands behind the Italian experiments with the form and serves to characterize Chaucer's as well. Only such a general model explains the relations between Chaucer's works and their Italian sources. For very few of Chaucer's similes are in fact translations of similes in Boccaccio's work. In the *Troilus*, fewer than half can be traced to the *Filostrato*, and the longer they are the more likely it is they are Chaucer's own compositions. In composing, he drew on a wide range of materials for the *imago* or *exemplum* and showed great variety in his clauses of application. Consider the similes in the *Teseida* and *Knight's Tale*. The longer *Teseida* is rich in extended similes, especially in the books describing the tournament and its aftermath (7-11). A prominent series likens the contestants to fierce animals, a convention Boccaccio adopted from his classical sources. He works a variation on this theme at 7.106, where, in a simile with a direct antecedent in Statius' *Thebaid*, Boccaccio likens the fears and apprehensions of the young knights to those of a hunter waiting on the rush of a lion whose whereabouts and size can only be surmised from his roar and the sound of his movements through the underbrush. In his much shorter narrative, Chaucer gives us only one extended simile, but it is a fully formed creation eleven verses long framed by clauses of application and containing a remarkably elaborate vehicle. It is based on Boccaccio's simile of the hunter from *Teseida* 7, but Chaucer places it in a different narrative context, rewriting the hunting scene completely.

It is instructive to compare this Chaucerian simile with its classical as well as its Italian source. In Book 4 of the *Thebaid* Statius describes the auguries Tiresias and Manto carried out before Eteocles. What is revealed frightens him, with a fear that Statius describes at length by means of a simile:

Qualis Gaetulae stabulantem ad confraga silvae
venator longo motum clamore leonem
expectat firmans animum et sudantia nisu
tela premens; gelat ora pavor gressusque tremiscunt;
quis veniat quantusque, sed horrida signa frementis
accipit et caeca metitur murmura cura.
(4.494-99)

(Just as in the dense Gaetulian forest a hunter flushes a lion from its lair by shouting long and loud, and while he waits for it steadies his thoughts and grips hard on his sweaty javelins; his face is cold with fear, his legs tremble. — Which beast and how big it is — but he takes in the terrifying signs of its rage and measures the sounds in blind worry.)⁹

Boccaccio uses the same simile in a different narrative context, at the beginning of the tournament in *Teseida* 7, where he describes the fearful apprehensions of the many participants:

⁹ I quote the *Thebaid* in the edition of D. E. Hill.

E ciaschedun per sé divenne tale,
 qual ne' getuli boschi il cacciatore,
 a' rotti balzi accostatosi, il quale
 il leon, mosso per lungo romore,
 aspetta e ferma in sé l'animo equale,
 e nella faccia giela per tremore . . .
 (7.106.1-6)

né sa chi venga né quale e' si sia,
 ma di fremente orribili segni
 riceve nella mente, che disia
 di non avere a ciò tesi l'ingegni;
 e 'l mormorar che sente tuttavia, . . .
 (7.107.1-5)

It is true, as Ker might have remarked, that such comparisons of state of mind to state of mind are frequent in Dante. But Boccaccio is clearly working directly from a classical source here. His version shows signs of having been influenced by the interpretive glosses on the *Thebaid*; for example, his "a' rotti balzi" for Statius' "confraga," which modern editors take to mean "dense undergrowth," comes about by way of the gloss:

qualis venator expectat leonem stabulantem ad confraga id est ad confractiones. aspera loca silvarum et deserta. dicuntur confraga a confringo, -gis. *getule silvae*. in getulia habundant leones. leonem dico *motum* id est commotum. *clamore* id est voce venatoris. vel rugitu leonis . . . tremiscit quia ignarus est. *quis* id est qualis. *veniat* id est venire debeat ille leo. id est quantum iratus et quantus in viribus. sed *accipit* id est audit. *et metitur murmura* id est rugitum leonis vel *murmura* sua. dicit enim apud se. ei mihi non evadam periculis.¹⁰

His expansion of "accipit" with two verbs, "riceve nella mente" and "sente," may come from "*accipit* id est audet" in the gloss. And his handling of the grammatically ambiguous construction "Quis veniat . . ." as "né sa chi venga né quale e' si sia" reflects the explanation "*quis* id est qualis, *veniat* id est venire debeat ille leo, id est quantum iratus et quantus in viribus."

The influence of such interpretive glosses on his translation only heightens the impression of the poet working closely and directly from a classical source. But he is not just translating. He works also with the general descriptive model of the simile. Note how careful he is to adjust for the plural number in his clause of application. Statius describes a single hunter and applies the example to one person, Eteocles; Boccaccio applies the *exemplum* to all of the knights

¹⁰ For this passage I quote the commentary from Firenze: Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 842, f. 46v; and London: British Library, Add. 16, 380, f. 163v.

waiting to begin the tournament ("E ciaschedun per sé divenne tale, qual . . .). And he works with a conception of how similes may develop a unified pattern of imagery. The change of narrative context is accomplished to this end. Boccaccio places the hunter simile before a distinctive series of formal comparisons that liken the actions of the contestants in the tournament to the attacks of fierce animals. The series attempts to revive a convention of classical epic, and antecedents for each of these similes can be identified in Statius and in Vergil:

[Arcita] "tale a veder qual tra giovenchi ... il fier leone"

(7.115.1-2)

"Qual per lo bosco il cinghiar . . . cotale entrò . . . Palemon"

(7.119.1; 7; 8)

"Ma qual la leonessa . . . cotal correndo Diomede" (8.26.1; 7)

"E quale . . . il leone,/ cotal Pelleo"

(8.49.1; 2-3)

Boccaccio's addition of the hunter simile anticipates this series by likening the apprehensions of each of these contestants to that of a hunter before such wild beasts. It effectively develops the conventional motif, alluding not only to classical tradition but to related comparisons in the *Teseida* itself.

Chaucer does something very much his own with this simile but not without showing that he has taken in the main features of its broader literary background. He transfers the whole sequence of comparisons from *Teseida* 7-8 to the earlier scene of Palamon and Arcite in the Athenian grove. The narrative context is therefore similar but involves a battle of decidedly smaller scale. In describing it, Chaucer picks up the animal imagery by means of short comparisons:

Thou myghtest wene that this Palamoun

In his fightyng were as a wood leoun,

And as a crueel tigre was Arcite.

As wilde bores gonne they to smyte. . . .

(1655-58)¹¹

He moves the hunter simile also, giving it the full scope of eleven lines. As in the *Teseida*, it anticipates the other comparisons; and here it anticipates the arrival of another hunting party as well, that of Theseus, which will bring the fighting to an abrupt halt:

And whan this duc was come unto the launde,

Under the sonne he looketh and anon

¹¹ Ed. Fisher 36. But I change the punctuation at the end of *KnT* 1647 from a comma to a period.

He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
 That foughten breme as it were bores two.
 (1696-99)

giving the patterned imagery yet another aspect.

The one extended simile of the *Knight's Tale* is essentially a new composition. Chaucer is, like Boccaccio before him, scrupulous about number in his two terms, here changing the single hunter to a plural, because the comparison is with Palamon and Arcite. Chaucer also specifies the first term differently than Boccaccio, who uses a verbal construction,

E ciaschedun per sé divenne tale
 (7.106.1)

which Chaucer replaces with the more concrete image of pallor:

To chaungen gan the colour in hir face
 Right as the hunters in the regne of Thrace

But the biggest changes appear in the narrative *exemplum* of the simile. Chaucer alters the place and nature of the hunt, and underscores its role in a comparison likening thoughts to thoughts by introducing a passage of direct discourse:

Right as the hunters in the regne of Trace,
 That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the leon or the bere,
 And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves,
 And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
 And thynketh, "Heere cometh my mortal enemy!
 Without faile, he moot be deed, or I,
 For outhur I moot sleen hym at the gappe,
 Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe."
 So ferden they in chaungyng of hir hewe.
 (1638-47)

Direct discourse like this is unusual in a simile, though perhaps a logical development in similes comparing states of mind to states of mind. Examples can be found in Dante (e.g. *Par.* 31.103-11), but not in Boccaccio. It is interesting to note therefore the suggestion of direct discourse in the classical antecedent to Boccaccio's simile. The grammatical construction of the passage is somewhat ambiguous, but Statius seems to have his waiting hunter ask himself "quis veniat quantusque" much as Chaucer's hunters tell themselves, "Heere cometh. . . ."

Whether or not Boccaccio's classical source was also used by Chaucer — the probability seems strong — it is clear that Chaucer is thinking about Boccaccio's

similes against a background of a general model and is composing his own variations of that model. The extended simile of the *Knight's Tale* is of the kind Boccaccio had also written, but it is not a translation of Boccaccio's simile. It is an English version of the classical form, just as Boccaccio's similes are Italian versions of the classical form. The underlying poetics is one of vernacularization, not of translation from Italian.

II. What has been said so far may be summed up as two corrections to Ker's thesis. (1) The explosion of simile-making in fourteenth-century Italy was kindled by descriptive writings as well as by the practical example of Dante's similes and can best be understood in the context of Italian concern for vernacularization of the high style, accompanied by a renewed interest in the classical models for that style. (2) Dante played an important role in this literary history, both in its descriptive aspect (in *De vulgari eloquentia*) and in practice (in the extended similes of the *Commedia*), but it is misleading to trace Chaucerian similes straight to Dante and to a Boccaccio "who copied Dante." The real landscape was considerably more various, with Boccaccio and others developing the formal comparison in distinctive ways. It remains then to illustrate some of that variety and to observe Chaucer's rejections and adaptations of the literary materials available to him. The exercise will suggest that Chaucer's extended similes owe much to the distinctive practice of Boccaccio and something perhaps to that of Petrarch as well.

I do not know whether the criticism of the *ornatus rhetoricus* so notable in the twelfth-century French writings on simile can be shown to have had a direct influence on the development of similes in fourteenth-century Italian literature. It is however tempting to think that disapproval of "mere descriptive ornament" lies behind the demanding, intellectual character of the vernacular similes, from Dante on. The Trecento Italian writers made demands on their readers through "learned" or allusive terms, for example, or extended applications. Comparisons in the *Commedia* often require awareness of thematic as well as descriptive similitude, forcing the readers' thoughts from the descriptive realm and the faculties of physical sense to the philosophical arguments they incorporate. Lansing has described the tendency well:

often in Dante's similes one discovers the presence of submerged correspondences which are manifest only when one extends the logic inherent in the similes' constituent parts or when one can perceive thematic interaction between a simile's imagery and the narrative context. . . .

(13)

Typically the comparison is not only challenging because it extends over several points of similitude, but because it takes the reader's thoughts from the narrative to its figural meaning. A related development has been noted in Boccaccio's

highly allusive terms of comparison, drawn from the bookish world of ancient myth and history rather than from contemporary scenes or natural phenomena. Boccaccio's "similitudine dotta," as Velli calls it, requires the reader to recognize events in classical history or legend in some detail, so as to match them to the foreground sequences of narrative events. Moreover, the correspondence between narrative terms can extend far back or look far forward in both. Velli's important essay, first published in 1974, offered the following passage from *Comedia delle ninfe* 18.36 for examination:

Le quali voci, come a' miei orecchi pervennero, non altrimenti mi fecero lieta che fosse il narizio duca già ne' porti della figliuola del Sole, di Cileno conosciuto l'avvento a sua salute.
(Velli 157)

Boccaccio's immediate source for this relatively obscure classical myth is either Boethius, *De consolatione* 4.3, or Ovid, *Fasti* 4.69. Boccaccio refers to it elliptically. Its application then involves a further degree of difficulty for the reader, for the author makes reference to a very specific point in the narrative as the *tertium comparationis*. To understand the way in which Mopsa is joyful at hearing these voices, one must know not only who the "narizio duca" is but precisely what happened to him in a given circumstance. In other similes in the *Comedia delle ninfe*, the field of reference is similarly bookish, with a "ridotto grado di notorietà del veicolo" (Velli 161) that requires the reader again and again to move about quickly and carefully in that bookish field of reference.

Velli's article draws its examples from the *Comedia delle ninfe* where learned similes of this sort are the rule. Boccaccio's *Teseida* and *Filostrato*, the two works of greatest interest to Chaucerians, present the form a little differently, and with a greater variety in the terms of comparison. Conventional imagery from the classical epics appear in both as well as similes adapted from Dante. But along with these one finds the bookish *exempla* as well, and these may involve very extended parallels with the foreground narrative (Anderson 57-65). For example, when Boccaccio likens the Amazons to the Danaides, the two narratives have many points of similarity, some still in the future with respect to the narrative context in which the simile appears. Boccaccio casts the comparison forward in time in his concluding verse:

e come fer le nepoti di Belo
nel tempo cheto alli novelli sposi
così costor, ciascuna col suo telo,
de' maschi suoi li spirti sanguinosi
cacciò, lasciando lor di mortal gielo
tututti freddi, in modi dispettosi;
e 'n cotal guisa libere si fero,
ben che poi mantenersi non potero.
(*Teseida* 1.7)

The function words ("come fer le nepoti . . . così costor ciascuna . . . cacciò . . . e 'n cotal guisa . . . ben che poi . . . non") underscore the sequence. Elements in both narratives may be correlated over an extended period. The words *come* and *così* mark the main terms; the rebellion of the Amazons is similar to the rebellion of the daughters of Danaus, who were ordered by their father first to marry their cousins and then to murder them on the wedding night. However, an extension of the *comparatio* is signalled with the third function word, "e 'n cotal guisa" applying the vehicle again, and implying that both Danaides and Amazons would find themselves "libere" as a result of their actions, although not permanently: the further point of comparison is left implicit, for the reader to discover, perhaps retrospectively at some point later in Boccaccio's narrative. The Danaides were condemned to perpetual servitude as water carriers in the underworld ("ben che poi mantenersi non potero") and the Amazons, too, will be overcome, in the later course of Boccaccio's narrative, by Theseus, who carries them in triumph back to Athens.

The "bookish" similes of the *Teseida* imply multiple points of correspondence with the main action, often looking forward to events yet to occur. The most remarkable example of this is the simile at 5.13, adapted by Chaucer as an apostrophe in the *Knight's Tale*, likening the rivalry of Palamon and Arcite to that of Polynices and Eteocles. Since the main action of the *Teseida* in its central books (3-8) is closely modelled on the Theban civil war caused by these two brothers, the simile in effect invites a comparison of Boccaccio's entire poem to Statius' epic of that war, the *Thebaid*. Other similes have less scope than this but nevertheless project the reader's thoughts well beyond the immediate context. At *Teseida* 8.80, for example, Boccaccio describes the revival of hope and desire in Arcita at a difficult point in the tournament. The reinvigoration of Antaeus during his wrestling-match with Hercules forms the *exemplum*. It is applied to Arcita, who is exhausted ("molto faticato") but is revitalized by the sight of Emilia ("mirando Emilia"). The play of narrative time in the two events is handled with great precision: The conclusion of the *exemplum* (Antaeus touching the earth and regaining his strength) brings us up to the present moment in the narrative; after seeing Emilia, Arcita returns to battle more energetic than ever before. Like Antaeus, he has gained the advantage in the contest. But there is an implied prediction as well, for Antaeus will later lose the wrestling match. Hercules will realize what gives him such strength, hold him aloft, and kill him. Arcita, too, after his success, suffers a sudden change in fortune, is thrown from his horse, and shortly thereafter dies. It is an implicit point of comparison, but thematically the most important, linking the story of Antaeus to the other examples of sudden changes in fortune that constitute a central theme of his narrative.

Incidentally, one may notice here again the role of classical models beside those of Dante among Boccaccio's literary antecedents. Boccaccio's use of a narrative vehicle with an extended play against the main narrative finds one

precedent in the classical epic from which he worked directly while composing many passages of the *Teseida*. In *Thebaid* 6, each of the winners in five athletic contests is described by a formal simile and each simile likens its subject to a mythological figure. The application explicitly and conventionally offers praise of his athletic ability by this association with a god or hero; but this application is not the most important one. With typically dark irony, Statius suggests how the winners in the games will shortly die spectacular deaths in the war for Thebes. Polynices is likened to Phaethon, who stole his father's chariot and lost control of it; Parthenopaeus to Hesperos; Hippomedon to Polyphemus, Capaneus to Tityos, Tydeus to Hercules and Antaeus. There can be no doubt Boccaccio new this series well. The first, that likening Phaethon and Polynices, is adopted as a brief comparison at *Teseida* 9.31; and as we have seen, Boccaccio adapts the simile of Hercules and Antaeus, the last in Statius' series, for his revitalization simile at *Teseida* 8.80.

Petrarch's vernacular similes should also be added to Ker's list of Italian antecedents to Chaucer, that is to say along with the distinctive "bookish" similes of Boccaccio. Chaucer never translates a Petrarchan simile as such, but shows the influence of Petrarch's distinctively self-conscious handling of the form, whereby certain formal aspects of the simile become subjects of discussion in their own right. An important instance is *Rerum vulgaria fragmenta* 135, the canzone "Qual più diversa," which appears just after the sonnet "S'amor non è" that Chaucer translated for the *Troilus*. It presents a highly elaborate series of comparisons as its main structuring element, seven similes spreading into six fifteen-line stanzas. In each one, the lover likens an exotic or magical thing to his experience in love. As Claudia Berra has recently pointed out, Petrarch gives each new and unexpected similitude a highly detailed application, involving so much crossing over of figurative elements from the one term to the other that the intellectual experience of wild comparing itself becomes a metaphor for the lover's over-excited state of mind. The canzone seems to be exploring the limits of the rhetorical form itself, in all its aspects, terms, application, and its elegant variation and multiplication of function words or grammatical markers.

The first two similes show this self-conscious exploration of the limits of the form. The first states the general premise of the sequence to follow and it opens with the quintessential function word identifying the *res similis*, "quale":

Qual più diversa et nova
cosa fu mai in qual che stranio clima
(*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* 135:1-2)

The subject to which this vehicle will be applied is also doubled, and the phrases marked by two function words:

quella
 più mi rasembra; a tal son giunto, Amore.
 (135:3-4)

The poet is saying that he "resembles" or has come to resemble, because of the workings of Amor, strange and marvelous things. The first thing is the phoenix:

Là onde il di ven fore
 vola un augel che sol, senza consorte,
 di volontaria morte
 rinasce, et tutto a viver si rinova.
 (135:5-8)

It is like the lover's will (*voler*), which a whole sequence of parallels will describe, drawn from verbal elements in the vehicle itself. The sequence is marked by repeated function words and grammatical parallelism in the verb phrases:

Così sol si ritrova
 lo mio voler, et così in su la cima
 de' suoi alti pensieri al sol si volve
 et così si risolve,
 et così torna al suo stato di prima:
 arde, et more, et riprende i nervi suoi
 et vive poi con la fenice a prova.
 (135:9-15)

The conclusion of this simile recalls the whole vehicle and names the *tertium comparationis* in the two compared terms. The other five stanzas of the canzone are built like panels of equal size around five other comparisons articulated according to the same formal pattern, including the reprise statement in conclusion.

This canzone has no verbal echo in Chaucer's works, but the kind of self-conscious development of the form does; as does the characteristically Petrarchan use of simile to describe the effects of love on a lover's thoughts. *Troilus* contains several similes of similar kind.

III. The similes of Chaucer's *Troilus* were composed as a parallel act of vernacularization of a Latin model rather than a consecutive act of translation from Italian originals. This critical sense behind his work can best be judged against the wider Italian background sketched above. It is apparent in the fate of Boccaccio's similes in Chaucer's hands and the new similes he adds to his text. We have briefly considered the *Knigh's Tale* and *Teseida* in this regard, where the shorter English work preserved one extended simile, and the imagery of one sequence of similes. The proportions of *Troilus* and the *Filostrato* are reversed:

Chaucer's work is longer, and not for any addition to the narrative but for the added ornaments from the classical high style. It is therefore especially suggestive to notice the complex fate of Boccaccio's similes in Chaucer's poem. Chaucer rarely translates them directly. As many as half are omitted entirely, but in compensation Chaucer has added similes where Boccaccio has none. In other instances he adapts the terms of a simile to another rhetorical form.

The English function words alone do not tell us much. The *Ad Herennium* had stressed the importance of *applicatio*, and the burden of this falls in part on the terms used to govern the simile. Italian poets used three pair of function words most frequently (and they tend to reserve these terms for use in formal comparisons): *tale/quale* (or *cotale*), *così/come* and *non altrimenti/che*, each of which has a clear antecedent in Latin. The last of the three was not adopted by Chaucer, who used no such "not unlike" construction in his extended similes; and at one place we catch him jettisoning the formula as he translates a simile from Boccaccio. At *Filostrato* 4.27, Troilo is likened to a slaughtered bull with the formula: "Né altrimenti il toro . . . che Troiolo." Chaucer converts the function words even while keeping the other terms the same: "Right as the wilde bole . . . right so" (4.239). His preferred markers for long similes have the intensifier *right* with *as* and *so*; and this pair of words, with or without the intensifier, are used where Boccaccio has "tale quale" or "così come." The simile at *Troilus* 2.967, like the extended simile in the *Knight's Tale*, opens with "Right as" and then marks the second term with "so": "Right as floures . . . right so" (cf. *Filostrato*, "quali i fioretti . . . cotal. . ."). At *Troilus* 4.1432, the same formula corresponds to "così/come": "And as the briddes . . . right so" (cf. *Filostrato* 4.138, "Sì come augel . . . così"). The employment of the intensifier seems not to be very significant. In the opening simile in *Troilus*, an extended simile without a direct antecedent in the *Filostrato* that draws attention to itself as a self-contained rhetorical performance both by its placement and its length, Chaucer nevertheless uses the milder "so/as" pair.

The remarkable aspect of Chaucer's manner of articulating the terms of a simile is the variety of other structures he finds to replace the standard "right as just so" formula. Most of Chaucer's similes are in fact unique with regard to the grammatical form of their application. Consider for example at *Mars* 236 ff., where the second term is introduced with "lyk a fissher" and the subject with "hit semeth" ("he hath enmyte"). The simile likening Pandarus' careful planning to the building of a house, which has sources in Latin tradition but not in the *Filostrato*, depends largely on implicit markers, moving from a generalization "For everi wight," to a specific application, "Al this Pandarus thought." There is another implied comparison at *Troilus* 2. 862 ff., where the statement to the effect that "crying about love has no more effect on the beloved than looking at the sun has on the sun," is built up with a succession of rhetorical questions linked by the conjunction "or." We have already noted the simile from the *Teseida* that appears in the *Knight's Tale* as an apostrophe (*Teseida* 5.13; *KnT*

1623-27). Beside it could be placed *Troilus* 3.1212 ff., which begins as an apostrophe ("O sooth is seyde") but turns into a formal comparison when the vehicle is applied through a self-conscious "I mene it here as for this aventure. . ."

Like Boccaccio in the hyperbolic comparison of *Teseida* 8, Chaucer often presents the poet in the act of finding, or applying, a term of comparison. A legendary term used in *Anelida and Arcite* is introduced like this:

But as the swan, I have herd seyde ful yore,
Ayeins his deth shal singen his penaunce.
So singe I here my destinee. . .
(AA 346 ff.)

And remarks on the origin or nature of the *res similis* appear with terms drawn from everyday experience also:

And lyk a fissher, as men alday may se,
(*Mars* 237)

But as we may alday oureselven se,
Thorough more wode or col the more fir
(*Troilus* 2.1331-32)

The same self-consciousness about the act of comparing can be seen when Chaucer makes use of indescribability formulas. Criseyde's beauty is superlative: "Nas nevere yet seyn thyng to been preysed derre" (1.174); its singularity may be described only at the top of a hierarchy:

Right as oure firste lettre is now an A
In beaute first so stood she, makeles.
(*Troilus* 1.171-72)

A *res similis* either has been found or it has not; Chaucer calls attention to the act of comparison both ways.

His independence from the specific terms of Boccaccio's similes is also evident in the selection or invention of a *res similis*. In *Troilus* these are usually drawn from the everyday realm of human experience; often the natural world of plants and animals, but occasionally the events of civic life as well. Boccaccio's characteristic "bookish" similes do not appear in the *Filostrato*, and the type does not appear among the extended similes in the *Troilus* either, though Chaucer's shorter comparisons may introduce a legendary vehicle (5.212, "as doth he Ixion in helle"). Boccaccio's influence shows more strongly in Chaucer's handling of a series of related similes. Those in the *Filostrato* have a certain uniformity; they describe the experience of Troilo and Criseida in love through one of two

patterns of imagery: either the simile proposes a comparison with some state of fire and water or it concerns a natural cycle of some kind, usually the blooming and fading of plants in the course of a day, a year, or in response to some unexpected event. Both sequences are introduced early in the narrative. At *Filostrato* 1.56 Troilo remarks that he will return from the brink of despair if Criseida will love him ("tornerò qual fiore in vivo prato"); then at 2.80 an extended simile describes the revival of his hopes in terms of flowers that reopen with the morning sun; the octave at 3.12 is an extended simile likening his joy to the rebirth of the natural world in spring; and the similes at 4.18 and 4.27 describe the effects on him of the decision to exchange Criseida for Antenore: he is like a lily quickly fading after it is cut by a plow; he is like a bull slaughtered by a blow to its head. The reiterative imagery has a predictive aspect like that of Boccaccio's learned comparisons in the *Comedia delle ninfe* and *Teseida*. From the beginning of the narrative they imply that the present joy of the lovers is frail and transitory; then the figures of cut flowers and dying animals later in the poem confirm these implications. The anticipation of future events is not articulated in the early similes, but is implicit in the imagery.

Chaucer's similes have a broader range of terms than those of the *Filostrato*, and they are applied to a greater variety of subjects. Where Boccaccio focuses on reinvigoration first and then fragility, Chaucer treats other subjects, including, in a Petrarchan mode, the state of mind of the lovers. But the general pattern of Boccaccio's comparisons is adopted and developed. Chaucer too employs the kind of repetitive, allusive imagery in his terms of comparison to suggest transience. He does so by gathering some of Boccaccio's flowers more or less directly. He drops the first short reference (along with the rest of the stanza at *Filostrato* 1.56), but translates the extended simile at *Filostrato* 2.80:

But right as floures, thorough the cold of nyght
 Iclosed, stoupen on hire stalkes lowe,
 Redressen hem ayein the sonne bright
 . . . right so . . . Troilus.
 (2. 967)

The joy that Troilus anticipates (3.351) is described in another comparison drawn from his source:

E sì come la nuova primavera
 (3.12)

In the reprise of these motifs after the downward turn in the lovers' fortunes, Chaucer ignores the comparison of the flower cut by the plow, but in its place composes a new one, presenting a tree in winter without leaves. The different *res similis* has the same application, to Troilus's depressed spirits. Chaucer then keeps Boccaccio's simile of the dying bull (*Filostrato* 4.27, *Troilus* 4. 239 ff.), with much the same application.

Some anticipation of this pattern had been prepared in two closely placed comparisons in Book 2. The narrative context has Troilus receiving an encouraging letter from Criseyde. His response is described by the narrator in a comparison of growing desire to a quickening fire as coal or wood is added to it. Chaucer takes this term of comparison from the *Filostrato* and adds a second:

Or as an ook comth of a litel spir
(2.1335)

The *tertium comparationis* here is apparently the great size attained by an oak tree, despite its small beginnings. The figure returns almost immediately then in an extended comparison in a speech by Pandarus, where however the great oak is being cut down, and the figure is applied differently:

Thenk here-ayeins: whan that the stordy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyveth hath the happy fallyng strook,
The greete sweigh doth it come al at ones
(2.1380ff.)

The literary antecedents in classical epic tradition are now clear, for the felling of a great tree is a conventional comparison for heroes falling in battle. Pandarus is applying it here to Criseyde rather than to Troilus or more precisely to the task of winning her. But the earlier use of the same figure and its martial antecedents may well suggest to the reader that it be applied to Troilus as well.

This is what happens in an extended comparison at 4.225. This simile, with nicely balanced attention to its two terms, describes the lover's despair at the imminent departure of his beloved. Its second term has only tenuous connections with the corresponding simile at *Filostrato* 4.18 ("Qual giglio nei campi dall'aratro intaccato . . . appassa"), direct antecedents in Vergil (*Aeneid* 6.309 f.), and Dante (*Inf.* 3:112 f.), and, I propose, important analogues in Petrarch. With it Chaucer reintroduces the great tree and, in a move reminiscent of Petrarch, he reintroduces "bark" metaphorically in the second term as the "bark of care or sorrow":

And as in wynter leves ben biraft
Ech after other til the tree be bare,
So that there nys but bark and braunche ilaft
Lith Troilus, byraft of ech welfare,
Ibounded in the blake bark of care. . . .
So sore hym sat the chaungynge of Criseyde.
(4.225-231)

It also completes the series of comparisons of the lovers to transient living

things, growing throughout the first part of the narrative and dying as it draws to a close, the end foreshadowed in the beginning. The series, if not this simile, clearly takes its inspiration from Boccaccio.

It has not been my aim to examine the similes of Chaucer's *Troilus* systematically but to represent the English poet against a diverse background, in which classical models and the similes of Dante's *Commedia* are joined by the distinctive inventions of Petrarch and Boccaccio. Chaucer's closest antecedent appears to be Boccaccio. Although he chose not to adopt Boccaccio's characteristic "bookish" terms in his similes, Chaucer was clearly influenced by the underlying principle of allusive challenge. Like Boccaccio, he offers terms of comparison that may be applied to the narrative action and its associated themes well beyond the immediate narrative context in which the simile appears. From Boccaccio, too, comes the repetition of details in the term employed, the fighting animals of the *Knight's Tale* and the dying plants of the *Troilus*, which serve to point up the extended application. What seems to be implied in the first appearance of a term of comparison is often made more or less explicit in its second or third appearance.

In conclusion it is appropriate to ask how the foregoing observations reflect on the two views of literary history with which this paper began. Although sorely tested, W. P. Ker's old thesis about the background to Chaucer's extended similes may be said to survive, at least in its central contention about the importance, for Chaucer, of the appearance of that rhetorical figure in the vernacular poetry of fourteenth-century Italy. It requires more significant adjustments, however, so as to admit the great variety proper to that Italian background. I propose it be restated as follows, broadening Ker's exclusive focus on Dante's practice to include theory, and changing the dismissive characterization of Boccaccio as one who "copied" Dante: "Italian Trecento writers, beginning with Dante, were responsible for a renewed interest in simile as an element of vernacular eloquence, or vernacular imitation of the Latin high style. Chaucer took the suggestion for his extended similes from these writers, imitating the classical model in ways reminiscent of Dante and Petrarch, and especially of Boccaccio." This emended thesis has much in common with the earlier school of Chaucerian commentary, so eager to compare Chaucer with classical authors. For it is this poetics of vernacularization, with its Italian antecedents, that the early Chaucerians identified in Chaucer's works when they praised him as master of the rhetorical figures in English. To say that Chaucer was "the noble rethor poete of grete breтайne" is much the same as asserting that he took the suggestion for imitating a classical rhetorical figure from Italian precedents, as long as both statements are placed in the full context of classical rhetoric in Italian literary tradition.

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Contained Conflict: Wild Men and Warrior Women in the Early Italian Epic

Representations of monstrous races appeared both in written and figural texts throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. From the fifth century B.C., when Herodotus first reported stories of fabulous races in India, western writers became fascinated with the depiction and analysis of the monstrous peoples they believed existed in the East (Wittkower 159). Church fathers debated the status of such populations, attempting to decide whether or not the hybrid monsters should be considered part of God's creation or *contra naturam*. St. Augustine set a precedent when he stated that if such races did exist and were truly human, then they must derive from the sons of Noah. He even hypothesized that God might have created such monstrous races to dissuade us from interpreting abnormal births as a failure of his divine plan (Wittkower 168). Thus, St. Augustine both collapsed and at the same time sustained the opposition of western man/eastern monster by claiming that such diversity contributes to the beauty of the whole — to the unity of the creator's plan. Many late medieval writers followed St. Augustine's lead and accepted the existence of eastern monsters while absorbing them into a Christian framework.

In the early Middle Ages a text known as the *Marvels of the East* spread images of wild races such as pygmies, giants, creatures with a single large foot used as an umbrella, and a hybrid race, half-human/half-dog, known as cynocephali. These collective fantasies made their way into various types of written texts including philosophical treatises, bestiaries, and chivalric epics (Husband 5-7).

During the 12th and 13th centuries, the wild man with his characteristic hairiness, gigantic stature, and club or tree branch for a weapon emerged as a new monstrous race (Husband 7). His particular identifying traits combined features of earlier monstrous races yet also differentiated him from those eastern counterparts. Artists and writers ignored these subtleties and simply placed the western wild man within the textual framework of the *Marvels of the East* (Husband 42). In the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, according to Friedman, the wild man "by metonymy . . . [comes] to represent all of the races, or at least the memory of all the others" (200).

Represented as both feared and desired, the wild man became a common figure in late medieval literature and art. He was feared because he represented temptation and chaos, all that was free of religious and social control. The wild man's club also suggested violence, and some authors, following St. Jerome's

choice of the word *pilosi* to describe demons, interpreted his hairiness as a sign of immorality, especially lustfulness (Husband 11). The depiction of the wild man living in the woods, however, also elicited desire because he symbolized a source of power seemingly untainted by social and political corruption (Bernheimer 144-45).¹ As a result, European explorers and scholars would later use the prototype of the idealized wild man to interpret their encounters with the "noble savage" of the New World (Friedman 199).

John Friedman, in his book on the monstrous races in medieval art and thought, lists four other fabulous populations that European authors depicted as noble savages throughout the Middle Ages (164). One of the races he lists is the Amazons, a group that Jacques de Vitry praised for both their military skills and their chastity (170-71). Authors of the early Italian epic often exalt a similar figure, the warrior woman, for those very same traits.

Numerous scholars in recent years have focused on eastern cultures as the primary form of the Other in the medieval epic tradition. I propose to examine the connection between this monstrous Other from the East and two other forms of alterity, the worker as wild man and the woman as Amazonian warrior, which appear in late medieval epics of northern and central Italy.²

The first figure I will look at, Pulicane, comes from the story of *Buovo d'Antona*, and exemplifies how Italian epic writers adopted the images of monstrous races from the East, in this case the cynocephalus with a human body and the head of a dog. Critics such as Daniela Delcorno Branca (304) and Henning Krauss (*Epica feudale* 202) have interpreted these monstrous epic characters as symbols of a new democratized concept of chivalry, which developed in late thirteenth-century Italian communes. According to these readings, monsters such as Pulicane represent a new bourgeois concept of society in which every man, even if he has the head of a dog, may "earn" the status of *signore*.

Delcorno Branca's article on the history of the *Buovo* narrative describes the popularity of the *Beuve d'Hantone chanson de geste* in Italy during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. After pointing out that the Saracen giant of the Old French epic, Açoart, transforms into the dog-headed figure of Pulicane in the Italian versions of the story, Delcorno Branca focuses on an early fifteenth-century version of the tale by the Tuscan writer Andrea da Barberino who expands the function of the hybrid creature by embellishing his role with a theological discussion, dating back to St. Augustine, about whether monstrous races have souls (Delcorno Branca 304). In fact, the cynocephali had been the focus of this debate among theologians for centuries because many of their

¹ Bernheimer views the identification with the wild man as an example of the aristocracy's "reversion to primitivism" in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

² For some of the most recent work on representations of Muslims in early Italian epics, see Franceschetti's "On the Saracens in Early Italian Chivalric Literature" and Allaire's "Portrayal of Muslims in Andrea da Barberino's *Guerrino il Meschino*."

mythical behaviors were considered rational (D. G. White 60-67).

While I agree with Delcorno Branca that this ethical discussion attempts to humanize that which is fantastic and monstrous about Pulicane, such an inclusive and egalitarian notion contradicts the text's equally strong support of aristocratic privilege and a rigid social order. A scene that illustrates these contrasting tendencies occurs when Buovo and his wife Drusiana escape from the Saracen King Marcabruno who wants to marry Drusiana against her will. Pulicane is sent by Marcabruno to capture the couple. When he catches up with them, however, Drusiana reminds Pulicane that she had once saved his life by claiming his status as a rational being, and she asks in return that he take Buovo as his lord and adopt the Christian faith:

O Pulicane, è questo il merito che tu mi rendi del servigio che io ti feci, quando io ero d'età di nove anni, che tu fusti menato per essere arso nel fuoco ardente, e dicevano che tu eri nato di mortale peccato, e generato d'animale irrazionale, come era uno mastino, in una femina razionale, e io ti domandai di grazia al padre mio, e scampa'ti dalla morte? E ora tu mi vuoi fare morire me e 'l mio signore? ché sai che Buovo è primo mio marito. O franco Pulicane, quando mi renderai merito di quello ch'io t'ho allevato e nodrito, se tu non mi meriti a questo punto? Or non credi tu che Buovo ti possa fare gran signore? E faratti battezzare in acqua santa, e sarai fedele cristiano.
(*I reali di Francia* 343-44)

In this passage, the author Andrea da Barberino uses terms from a tradition of philosophical texts such as "animale irrazionale" and "femina razionale." Yet, Andrea has placed the scholastic debate about the status of wild men within the context of a feudal pledge. Pulicane's status as a rational being with a soul depends on his fealty to a noble, Buovo. God's grace can only be obtained by the wild man through the agency of a feudal lord. In other words, the "bourgeois" philosophical discussion uses the terms of a feudal discourse.

Unlike Pulicane, whose alterity derives not only from his subordinate class status but from his pagan religion, the woodsman Varocher in the Franco-Italian Marciano XIII narrative *Macaire* has no religious characterization. In the early fifteenth century, Andrea da Barberino retold the late thirteenth or early fourteenth-century tale of *Macaire* in his text *Le storie nerbonesi*, changing Varocher's name to Ispinardo and his profession to that of a coalman. Varocher and Ispinardo performed jobs on the margins of urban culture; yet despite the low status accorded such workers in fourteenth-century Italian communes, both the anonymous writer of the *Macaire* text and Andrea da Barberino represent their character as a wild man whom the nobility seems to accept. Just as cynocephali lived on the edges of the known world in Africa and in Asia, wild men inhabited the margins of urban culture (D. G. White 68).

In order to illustrate the role of the wild man in the Italian chivalric epic of the late Middle Ages, I would like to digress briefly and look at Hayden White's analysis of the representation of the noble savage in eighteenth-century Europe.

In his article on the noble savage as fetish, White explains how such a figure fulfilled the ideological needs of the rising bourgeoisie:

. . . the rising classes needed a concept to express their simultaneous rejection of the nobility's claims to privilege and desire for similar privileges for themselves. The concept of the Noble Savage served their ideological needs perfectly, for it at once undermined the nobility's claim to a special human status and extended that status to the whole of humanity. But this extension was done only *in principle*. (194)

White stresses in this passage that, although the equal status extended to all of humanity in theory, in reality it functioned only to empower the bourgeoisie. While the fetishized Other of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie is distinguished from the medieval wild man in that his/her difference derives from foreign identity rather than lower class status, these two figures resemble each other in that the extension of equal rights they represented occurred only in a token manner, demonstrating that these egalitarian ideals existed only in theory.

To illustrate this point, let me return to the *Macaire* narrative. Varocher earns the status of a knight by saving the Queen of France from an attack by the wicked Maganza clan. Macaire, representing this evil faction in the tale, falsely accuses Charlemagne's wife, Biancofiore, of adultery with a dwarf. Charlemagne eventually realizes that Biancofiore is innocent of the charges and has Macaire quartered. By this time, however, the pregnant Queen, exiled by the Emperor, had already been abandoned in the forest. There Biancofiore meets the woodsman, Varocher, who helps her leave the forest and return to her father, the King of Hungary. Upon learning of the injustice against his daughter, the King of Hungary declares war on Charlemagne. During the ensuing battle, the Queen's father dubs Varocher a knight and eventually the woodsman and Ogier reconcile the two sides.

When the *Macaire* narrator first describes Varocher, he uses less than complimentary terms:

En soa man oit un gran baston prenu;
Grant fu e grosso e quaré e menbru,
La teste oit grose, le çavi borfolu:
Si stranches hon no fo unches veu.
(*Macaire* 14773-76)

(In his hand he carried a big club; he was big, large, square and strong. He had a big head, and dishevelled hair: such a strange man has never been seen.)

Later, Varocher will be labeled "hairy" (*velu*) and a "wild man" (*salvaço*). Yet despite such negative characteristics, the woodsman proves himself a powerful warrior and intensely loyal to the Queen and her father. The narrator, however, does not judge the woodsman's motives for his service or the means by which Varocher helps the Queen and her father. For example, when Biancofiore first

meets Varocher in the woods, she gains his assistance by offering him a reward or *guiderdon*. In a later scene, as Varocher returns the Queen to her father, they stay at an inn where the woodsman intimidates the innkeepers so that they follow his orders.

The Hungarian King dubs Varocher a knight, and his peers comment on how the trappings of chivalry have completely changed him. Yet, even after his conversion, Varocher alters his tactics very little. As a final example of Varocher's willingness to use any means necessary to protect his patrons, during the battle with Charlemagne the woodsman leads a group of men into the Emperor's camp and ransacks it while the French knights sleep. The raiders take everything: equipment, arms, horses, gold, and silver. When Varocher recruits the men for this "honorable" campaign, he proves his knightly *largesse* by promising enough booty to make them and their families rich. The narrator describes Varocher as a wild man and a thief; yet, this "ideal" knight is also blindly loyal to the cause of the "just" family with whom his interests are linked even when they are in exile. As reward for both his thievery and his loyalty, Varocher receives immense wealth and prestige.

It is hard to believe that wealthy Northern Italian merchants identified with the woodsman Varocher. Because of his rough appearance and unchivalrous actions, it seems more likely that the new urban elite would have sympathized with the nobility in these romance epics. Varocher does, however, represent a new concept of chivalry in which the knight earns his status, and if he is loyal enough, can even come from the most humble background. This "democratization" of the mythology of chivalry in Carolingian epics allowed communes and the aristocracy that controlled them to maintain the polarization of *vilain* and noble, yet also to promise that the exceptional *vilain*, if he were loyal to the right faction, might enter the privileged group.

In several Old French *chansons de geste*, such as Raimbert's version of the *Chevalier Ogier*, epic writers describe Italians as incapable of fulfilling the duties of a knight. Despite the rise of mercantile and administrative classes within their own communes, French authors often represented the Lombards as cowardly warriors whose status as knights depended more on wealth and profession than on blood line (Krauss, "Ritter und Bürger" 209-15).³ Thus, the French aristocracy's fear of social mobility, of the economic changes that had begun in their own cities as well as in Italy, was displaced onto the foreigners, the Lombards.

So as not to accept the role of scapegoat, the Italians rewrote the Old French romance epics and in the process adopted a different approach that seemed to

³ For example, Krauss quotes the following verses from the *chanson de geste*, *Les Narbonnais*, in which it is explained that Lombards cannot be good knights because they are merchants: "Par Dieu, Lonbart, trop estes bobancier. / Ne devez pas a franc home tencier. / Chevalerie n'est pas vostre mestier, / Mes trosiax vandre et monoie changier" (vv. 1608-11).

embrace “earned” social mobility. In *La Prise de Pampelune*, Lombards take the city of Pampelune for Charlemagne, who rewards them with the fulfillment of their leader’s three wishes. The Lombard leader, Desiderio, asks that all Lombards become free men, that all those with enough possessions have the opportunity to become knights even if they are not of noble origin, and that all Lombards can carry a sword in front of the Emperor (*La Prise* 10). This romance epic not only exonerates the Lombards from the French accusations of cowardice, but attempts to redefine the institution of knighthood. A knight now “earns” his position as evidenced by his possessions rather than his blood lineage. Yet, both Desiderio and Charlemagne are dynastic rulers, and the apparent democratization of chivalry in *La Prise de Pampelune* clouds the issue that many of the men who were wealthy enough to become knights came from or married into noble families.

While this new construction of chivalry empowered the elite of the emerging mercantile, administrative, and artisan classes, it did not usually extend to workers. The new definition of knighthood does not challenge the old one but rather modifies it to the needs of a new urban aristocracy dependent on the support of the *popolo*.⁴ The new patricians wanted the kind of autocratic power possessed by the German Emperors and French Kings without the economic submission required for alliances with such rulers. The apparent democratization of chivalry was one answer to that dilemma.

The difference of the monstrous man in chivalric epics is not only defined in terms of his status as an easterner or foreigner but — in the case of Pulicane, Varocher, and Ispinardo — by his social class. Yet, few upwardly mobile wild men lived in real Italian communes. Despite these textual representations, laborers rarely assimilated into the urban aristocracy but rather remained as alien to the communal nobility as the figures in the *Marvels of the East*.

Another textual model for the wild men of the early Italian epic is the Saracen giant Rainourt, who appears in several different epics of the Old French Guillaume cycle. The *chanson de geste* which expands and delineates this character, *Aliscans*, enjoyed considerable success both within France and on the Italian peninsula. A Franco-Italian version exists dating from the middle of the fourteenth century, and the narrative is retold in Florentine by Andrea da Barberino towards the beginning of the fifteenth century in his *Le storie nerbonesi*.

Rainourt and the wild men of Italian epics share several features: their gigantic stature and power, their preference for a club rather than a sword, their humble professions, and finally their generosity and fidelity. Rainourt, however, also shares Pulicane’s eastern origins as he is the son of a pagan king and the brother of the Saracen princess, Guiborc, who marries Guillaume. Even though

⁴ Krauss argues that the character Varocher represents a new, democratic “volksheer” in Italy (“Ritter and Bürger” 221).

he is of noble origin, Rainourt descends to the level of a wild man and is forced to work as a kitchen-helper at the court of the French King before he transforms into a knight and later converts to Christianity. Like Varocher, even after Rainourt reintegrates into the social and military elite, he elicits laughter from his fellow knights (and presumably the epic's audience) by confusing the social codes of the *vilain* with those of a knight: he rides his horse backwards, overindulges in food and drink, and scorns the use of a knight's proper weapon, a sword, for his enormous *tincl* or Herculean club.

In exception to the standard critical view of feudal *chansons de geste* as less democratic than their bourgeois Italian copies, Rainourt demonstrates the existence in Old French epics of wild men who move up in social status. Rustic *vilains* who transform into chivalric heroes appear in several late Old French epics including *Gaufrey*, *Gaydon*, and *La Chevalerie Doon de Mayence* (Newth xxv). In one of the first studies written on the Rainourt character in 1909, the critic Alberto Friscia interprets the Saracen wild man as a metaphor for the new urban population of France's twelfth-century communes, which refused the oppression of the landed aristocracy and the church. He compares Rainourt to the working people who seem good and charitable in everyday life but if angered might transform into monsters difficult to control (55-56). In a similar but less dramatic fashion, Henning Krauss, in a 1980 analysis of the Marciano XIII manuscript, theorizes that the wild man Varocher represents a protobourgeois ideology, which promotes equality for everyone and denounces the concept of nobility by birth (*Epica feudale* 202).⁵

These analogous interpretations of wild men in chivalric texts seem to question the notion that the early Italian epic represents a new bourgeois world view particular to Italy. Such interpretations perpetuate the notion of a communal social order in which wealthy merchants, artisans and administrators, the so-called bourgeoisie, ally with the workers to fight the traditional nobility. The complex world of both French and Italian communes which historians such as Jacques Le Goff and Gene Brucker have described do not necessarily support such a notion of communal social order. The ideologies of new social groups that were able to assimilate into the communal aristocracy often did not openly question the privileges of the elite but instead tried to appropriate them.

Le Goff argues that much like their Italian counterparts seigniorial and bourgeois classes in French medieval cities shared many of the same economic interests and created what he terms a "feudo-bourgeois" culture (244). French and Italian texts describe similar hybrid groups: the *gros* and the *menus* in France and the *popolo grasso* and the *popolo minuto* in Italy. Although Le Goff points out that the French groups were never as well organized and self-conscious as their

⁵ Krauss qualifies this interpretation when he states that the generic mediation of the *chanson de geste*, with its feudal values, prohibits Varocher from completely embodying a bourgeois self-consciousness (202).

contemporaries in Italian city-states such as Florence, he refers to the *gros* as the patricians of French communes, a new urban aristocracy whose "golden age" was the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (331-32).

The role of the monarchy in France and the relative independence of Italian city-states created notable differences in the urban development of the two countries, but the similarities are also important. Although it left less of a mark on French cities than on Italian communes, the landed aristocracy influenced the development of these growing municipalities. Thus, both in France and in Italy, the Carolingian epics served as a vehicle for spreading chivalric mythology in urban societies as the new feudo-bourgeois patricians searched for traditions to legitimize their own power and glorify their bloody factional violence.

The Old French *chanson de geste*, *Aliscans*, not only offers a model for the figure of the wild man, but for yet another marginal figure in early Italian epics: the warrior woman. Rainourt's sister, Guiborc, marries the Christian hero Guillaume d'Orange. Although she does not actually engage in battle, Guiborc dons armor and encourages the other ladies of Orange to follow her lead so that they might defend the city while Guillaume goes to seek aid from the King in Paris. When the pagan forces arrive before Guillaume's return, Guiborc and the other ladies keep them at bay by throwing rocks down on the invaders' heads from the towers. This strategy earns them some time and the respect of the narrator. The competence of Guiborc and her rock-throwing ladies quickly comes into question, however, when Guillaume returns in disguise but his wife does not recognize him and refuses to open the gate for the epic hero. In both the case of Rainourt and of his sister Guiborc, humor is used to differentiate workers and women who have donned the trappings of chivalry from the true knights whose prestige the exploits of these temporary surrogates serve only to enhance. Christian men with titles remain the model of behavior, the paragon of virtue and courage. Although the medieval epics rewrite the various forms of the Other (Easterner, worker, and woman) in terms of the ideal knight, the authors of such texts add a humorous element to these new characterizations so as to reestablish the social hierarchy. In the words of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White:

The Other must be transformed into the Same, the savage must be civilized . . . ; but at the same time, the Other's mimicry . . . is treated as absurd, the cause of derisive laughter, thus consolidating the sense that the civilized is always-already given. . . . (41)

As *Aliscans* demonstrates, the woman in armor, like the wild man, appears as a figure both in fourteenth-century *chansons de geste* as well as the Italian epics (Newth 33). The Guillaume cycle epics, however, did not serve as the only textual model for such figures. Classical tales about Amazons also contributed to long-standing notions of gender difference and women's essential inferiority.

Benoît de Sainte-Maure's twelfth-century reworking of the classical tales of

Troy into a French epic, *Le Roman de Troie*, functioned as one of the most important sources of information about Amazon mythology throughout the late Middle Ages. Benoît introduces the Amazons by describing their "great land" somewhere in the East, which he calls *Amazoine* or *Femenie*.⁶ These warrior women live without men most of the year, but from April to June they inhabit an island covered with precious trees and herbs, where the most valiant of the Amazons mate with men from nearby lands. The male children stay with their mothers for only one year before they are given to their fathers to be raised, while the female progeny remain citizens of *Amazoine*. Benoît emphasizes the women warriors' strength and prowess (14). He also makes clear, however, that the warrior women's ability to defend themselves and their space threatens men: any man who dares to step on their land will be cut to pieces (15).

The Norman writer then somewhat softens this picture of the Amazons by describing their leader's retention of feminine qualities. Panthesilée is both beautiful and courageous in battle:

Proz e hardie e bele e sage,
De grant valor, de grant parage,
Mout ert preisiee e honoree.
(vv. 23287-89)

(Courageous, bold, beautiful and wise, of great valor and lineage, she was very esteemed and honored.)

The Queen's unique combination of feminine and masculine attributes reappears when Benoît explains her reasons for offering military assistance to the Trojans: she wants to see her love-interest Hector, but also intends to win rewards and booty.⁷

Once Panthesilée arrives in Troy with her legions of Amazons and discovers that Hector has been killed by the Greeks, her yearning to see the Trojan hero transforms into a desire to avenge him. She does so admirably — equalling the Greek hero Pirrus in both arms and words. At one point, Pirrus sees his fellow Greeks fleeing from a battle that they had been losing against the mighty Amazons. He chastises his men for allowing themselves to be overcome by mere females. Panthesilée then responds to Pirrus by claiming that she and her soldiers are not "ordinary" women, who are vain and fickle:

Tu cuides que nos seions taus
Come autres femmes comunaus,
Que les cors ont vains e legiers:
Ço n'est mie nostre mestiers.

⁶ The description of *Amazoine* appears on pp. 12-14. Benoît uses the term *Femenie* on p. 36, v. 23691.

⁷ Kleinbaum describes Benoît's Amazons "as a hybrid of both male and female virtues" (51). She attributes this "faintly positive image" to the influence of courtly love. (58).

Puceles somes: n'avons cure
 De mauvaistié ne de luxure.
 (vv. 23999-24004)

(You believe that we are all like other ordinary women, who have vain and fickle hearts: that is not our calling. We are maidens: we do not pay attention to either evil or lust.)

The Queen goes on to say that Amazons carry arms and protect their own land, but above all she defends their extraordinary status by proclaiming that, unlike most women, they are chaste, engaging in sex only for procreative purposes. Thus, Panthesilée upholds the traditional ideal of chastity for women, while critiquing her sex's tendency towards concupiscence.

Although she articulates a notion of female sexuality that he favors, Benoît must kill off Panthesilée for her martial hubris. Pirrus and the other Greeks gang up on Panthesilée, hacking the Amazon Queen into small pieces. Benoît concludes the description of Panthesilée by commenting: "C'est damages" (65). The woman who thought she was as virtuous as a man dies with little dignity.

A thirteenth-century Italian author who frequented the court of Frederick II in Palermo, Guido delle Colonne, used Benoît's text as the basis of his *Historia Destructionis Troiae*, which then became the most popular vehicle for communicating the medieval tales of Troy; there are over 150 manuscripts of Guido's text that was translated into French, German, English, Spanish, Flemish, Bohemian, and Italian (Meek xi). Through both vernacular and Latin texts such as Benoît's and Guido's, the myth of the Amazon warriors contributed to debates about gender difference in Italy as well as the rest of Europe.⁸

Boccaccio's treatise on famous women, *De mulieribus claris*, serves as an important example of the contradictory nature of such classical representations in late medieval Florence. Just as Benoît depicted a Queen of the Amazons who described herself as having overcome women's natural moral and physical weakness, Boccaccio praises his Penthesilea for having "tamed" the "softness" of her female body with virile exercise (Boccaccio 730).⁹ Boccaccio then goes on to question the whole notion of essential gender qualities by asserting that *usus* or custom can change one's nature (Boccaccio 731). He claims that idleness can feminize men's nature just as military exercise had improved Penthesilea's into a *virago*. Boccaccio contains the threat presented by his admission that gender is defined in cultural terms, however, by continuing to represent masculinity and femininity as binary opposites, with the former as the superior identity.¹⁰

⁸ Rajna was the first scholar to note that the warrior woman of the Italian Carolingian epic evolved out of the medieval stories of Troy (49).

⁹ For a more complete analysis of how Boccaccio measures women according to their ability to act like men, see Jordan and Benson.

¹⁰ Tomalin refers to this contradictory argument as "double-think" (25). Jordan discusses parallels between Boccaccio's view of women in *De mulieribus claris* and his description of the *popolo* in *De casibus virorum illustrium*. The ideological similarities echo those shared by the figures of the

Women receive praise only when they are as virile as men. St. Augustine hypothesized that monsters from the East served as a reminder of the order of God's universe; in a similar fashion, Boccaccio conceived of warrior women as monstrous figures whose discomfiting presence actually strengthened the notion of a rigid feminine/masculine dichotomy.

Like Benoît and Boccaccio, the authors of early Italian epics develop strategies of praising and yet also containing warrior women. In various fourteenth and fifteenth-century Italian versions of the *chanson de geste*, *Chanson d'Aspremont*, the warrior woman, Galaziella, appears for the first time. Galaziella is the daughter of Penthesilea, and a Saracen king Agolante. Andrea da Barberino mentions that Galaziella is an illegitimate daughter of the King; from her first appearance in the text her difference is marked by the term *bastarda* (*L'Aspramonte* 44). Galaziella immediately stands out in yet another way; she does not follow the longstanding literary model of the lady who encourages her love interest as she watches jousting matches from a balcony.¹¹ Instead the warrior woman sighs in disappointment because she would like to participate and defeat the male contestants whose skills she can surpass. After her brother arms her so that she "seems" a knight, Galaziella overcomes several Saracen opponents.

It is at this point that the narrative reinscribes Galaziella into the proper social order; she makes a deal with her father that she may marry any man who can beat her in a duel. In all the versions, Galaziella's father or brother states that the warrior woman should only marry a man who can control her through physical force. In the Tuscan *Cantare d'Aspramonte*, it is Galaziella herself who first decides that she should marry a man who can dominate her.

Dammi parola, padre, per tu' onore,
che ss'io truovo uomo di me più possente
il qual m'abatta per suo gran valore
in piana terra del destriere corrente,
ched io il prenda per marito e signore.
(VI, 13)

Once again, the threat to established notions of gender provoked by the appearance of the warrior woman is contained by the naturalized social dichotomy of masculinity/femininity. The woman who has defied the binary construction of gender states that her father must honor this essential social order. The Christian knight, Riccieri, defeats Galaziella and she immediately insists on converting to Christianity and marrying her former opponent.

warrior woman and the wild man in the early Italian epic (43-44).

¹¹ Allaire points out that women watching male military games from a balcony is a common image in classical and medieval literature that defines the "feminine" as "passive observation and confined space" ("The Warrior Woman" n. pag.).

Galaziella, the warrior woman, quickly transforms into Galaziella, the wife and mother.

Furthermore, in Andrea da Barberino's prose version of the story, the narrator directly relates the threat of Galaziella to patriarchal rule with the Saracen threat to Christian supremacy.¹² Before the description of Galaziella's masculine behavior, a Saracen king, Galafo, who wants to make peace with the princess' father, Agolante, offers her a gift. Galafo gives the warrior woman a sword; in fact, the world's most famous sword, Durindarda, which had once belonged to the Emperor Charlemagne. After this exchange in which the phallic symbol of power has been passed to a woman, Andrea da Barberino states that Galaziella took pity on the Saracen king because of her "cuore femminile" (46).

The term *feminile* had only been used once before in the epic when Andrea da Barberino berates *buffoni*. In an aside to the audience, the narrator claims that *jongleurs* tend toward a feminine soul, which makes them cowardly and envious (39).¹³ For Andrea to assert that Galaziella's nature is feminine, or in other words, weak and envious, suggests that she should not be the bearer of this sword as it is a symbol of patriarchal power. The rest of the epic deals with how to restore the phallus to its rightful owner, the Christian emperor. Just as Galaziella must accept the authority of her husband, the Saracens must accept their subordination to the Christians.

Unfortunately, Galaziella's domestic bliss ends very quickly when she and her husband are attacked by Saracens allied with Riccieri's jealous brother. Riccieri is killed and Galaziella is condemned to die by her Saracen father, who had opposed his daughter's marriage to a Christian knight. At this point, Andrea da Barberino informs us that his unreliable oral sources differ as to subsequent events. Some say that the pregnant Galaziella was burned at the stake, while others claim that her brother imprisoned her in Africa, and still others that she gave birth to twins.

The fifteenth-century Laurenziano Palatino manuscript 101, vol. II, narrates the last of the three versions.¹⁴ Galaziella is on her way to be imprisoned in Africa when she tells the captain that she has a strange craving to put on her armor. The captain gives in to the apparent whim of the pregnant princess, only to be overwhelmed by her military skill. Galaziella forces the captain to set her free on an unknown shore where she follows a road into a city. On her journey she just happens to run into an enormous, threatening snake, which she kills

¹² Zemon Davis discusses how in the late Middle Ages the "relation of the wife — of the potentially disorderly woman — to her husband was especially useful for expressing the relation of all subordinates to their superiors" (127).

¹³ Although documents refer to Andrea as a *canterino* or public singer, and he might have recited this very narrative in a Florentine piazza, in many ways he distances himself from the oral tradition even as he depends on it.

¹⁴ The narrative ends with Antonio di Giovanni da Bacherato, a Florentine citizen, claiming to have finished writing the story in 1487.

with her sword. She then becomes the hero of the African *signoria* where she finds herself and which is ruled by a female *signore* — the Queen, Frolietta.

This version of the Galaziella story then employs another common strategy used to contain the warrior woman: it kills her off. To be more specific, she dies in childbirth. Galaziella's story does not end, however, because she manages to give birth to twins, who each continue the family's trait of contained difference. Her son, Aquilante, after a series of adventures is abandoned in the woods, is raised by a female monkey, and becomes a wild man. He is hairy, gigantic, very strong, and carries a club. The other twin, a daughter, Formosa, is raised by the Amazon Queen Frolietta, and grows up to be even a more skilled fighter than her biological mother. The narrative describes how both Formosa and her wild man brother are eventually reinscribed into the proper social order and learn to use their force to support Carlomagno.

Despite her impressive military and rhetorical skills, Formosa, like her mother, winds up advocating the subordinate status of women in the heterosexual couple. The reference to beauty in her name as well as the continual references to her feminine grace suggest the eventual containment of the warrior woman's gender-bending. As a young woman, Formosa learns that the Sultan of Babylonia has created "el giardino senza femine" (f. 14v). No woman is allowed to enter it under the threat of death. Formosa is clearly outraged by this prohibition and takes it upon herself to open this exclusively masculine space to women. All this seems like a direct threat to the naturalized gender order until Formosa reaches the garden, enters in disguise as a knight, and is propositioned by a dirty old Saracen who, the text explicitly tells us, does not like women and believes Formosa is a man:

Molti si maravigliavano della sua belleça. . . . Luchanfera, il quale era un saraino che pocho a grado avea il sesso femminile . . . l'andò a vedere e pavegli una bella chosa. . . . Allora, il vechio lusingoso credendo lui fusse maschio lo prese per la mano e menollo alla sua tavola. . . .
(f. 16r)

This proposition makes clear that Formosa's upcoming battle is not just to support "l'onore delle donne" but also to defend the heterosexual couple, threatened by the Saracen sodomites who frequent the garden (f. 15v).

Continuing in her mother's footsteps, Formosa fights and defeats several Saracen and Christian knights, even giants. The only one she cannot defeat, Orlando, she wants to marry (f. 37v). Since Orlando is already taken, however, she pledges a vow of chastity and converts to Christianity (f. 159v).¹⁵ The story

¹⁵ She pledges a vow of chastity first to the goddess Diana and then to the Virgin Mary. On f. 20v there is a drawing of Formosa participating in a joust. The only thing that distinguishes her from the other knights is a figure of Diana on her helmet. Once again, her sexual difference is marked at the same time that it is effaced by the symbol of chastity.

ends when Formosa is knifed to death in bed by a Saracen knight whom she had defeated in battle and rejected in love. Just as Galaziella learns to use her military skill to defend her husband and the Christian cause, Formosa's final scene illustrates, not her exceptional military skill, but the ultimate feminine virtue — chastity. The beautiful warrior woman becomes a metaphor for the entire Christian cause: she dies defending her body's boundaries from the threat of pagan contamination. The author first marks the character's difference, her femininity, with the name Formosa, and then contains the threat of such a physically attractive woman with a public role by neutralizing her sexuality. She not only pledges chastity but then is mutilated by the man with whom she had refused to have sex.

Another famous warrior woman, Braidamonte, appears in the anonymous fourteenth and fifteenth-century epics of Rinaldo da Montalbano. Like Galaziella, she too is a *bastarda* since her father is the French Duke Amone who had an affair with the pagan queen Belialta and left her pregnant when he returned to France.¹⁶ While Formosa shares some of her exploits with her brother the wild man, Braidamonte's partner in arms is another warrior woman, Dama Roenza. Allaire notes that this "early example of a female 'buddy' story" explicitly links the two women's military careers and develops their relationship with a good deal of detail ("The Warrior Woman" n. pag.). The narrator introduces both Amazonian fighters in the same chapter; they each arrive with troops to reinforce the Saracen cause during a cease-fire in the midst of a bitter struggle with the Christians (f. 66r).¹⁷ Although the women are portrayed as unusually strong and courageous, the narrator suggests that Dama Roenza is the most fearsome of the two. Unlike Braidamonte, Dama Roenza usually runs rather than rides a horse and carries a sickle instead of a sword. Despite her wild nature, Dama Roenza nurtures Braidamonte, who is only sixteen years old and on her first military campaign. She invites Braidamonte to stay in her tent, treats her with great respect, and enjoys her companion's friendship. Furthermore, Dama Roenza loves Braidamonte for both her beauty and military skill; she organizes a tournament for her friend to show off her skills and feels great happiness when Braidamonte manages to defeat all her male opponents.

Braidamonte's identification with her female companion, however, does not last. Dama Roenza succeeds in defeating and capturing numerous Christian heroes, including Olivieri and Braidamonte's father Amone. Braidamonte soon shifts her loyalty, identifying with her Christian father rather than her Saracen "sister." It is at this point in the story that the narrator distinguishes between the two warrior women. The root of Dama Roenza's power becomes evident; the narrator connects her uncontrollable physical force with women's most notorious

¹⁶ There is one exception — a fifteenth-century *cantare* describes Braidamonte as a legitimate member of the family (Tomalin 56).

¹⁷ I am referring to the manuscript's pagination.

vice — lust. Dama Roenza expresses her desire by inviting the Christian knight Ulivieri to sleep with her. He refuses saying that he could only sleep with a Christian woman and would first need to marry her. The bitter Dama Roenza then pledges to kill Ulivieri for having refused her advances. Braidamonte, on the other hand, decides to free the Christian prisoners, including her father, an objective which pits her against her brother Rinaldo. Unaware of her identity, Rinaldo defeats his sister and removes her helmet to kill her. The beauty of this opponent confuses him:

. . . Rinaldo . . . si maravigliò che tanta forza fusse in una damigiella et quasi non sapea s'ell'era femmina o maschio.
(f. 70v)

Braidamonte convinces Rinaldo not to kill her by explaining that she is his sister and that she intends to free their father and the other Christian prisoners. Her image is softened even further when one of the Christian prisoners, Girardo, tells the father that he hopes to marry Braidamonte when she converts to Christianity.

As Braidamonte evolves into a feminine character, Dama Roenza's identity transforms into that of a monster. When she discovers Braidamonte's betrayal, she seems "indimoniata" and calls her former companion a "puttana" (ff. 72r-72v). Once again, she expresses her evil nature by trying to seduce Orlando. She asks him to father her children, saying that their offspring would be powerful enough to take over the world. He responds to her advances by claiming his virginity and explains that he is already promised to the most beautiful woman in the world. The narrator then tells us that it is the knight's innocence that upsets the worldly woman warrior:

Quand'ella gli udì dire ch'era vergine, tutta si turbò e andogli addosso, gridando: "Ai Machometto, or chome sofferi che um tale huomo . . . è nimicho dell'umana natura?"
(f. 73v)

In the end, Rinaldo saves the desperate Christian forces from the monstrous Dama Roenza by tricking her. He succeeds in lopping off her right leg only because he orchestrates a surprise attack after pretending to have died (ff. 77r-77v). Although such a tactic does not seem chivalrous enough for a famous Christian knight, her nearly satanic character justifies his conduct. In fact, a long tradition legitimized less than honorable strategies when male heroes needed to conquer unruly Amazons (Kleinbaum 60). In the meantime, Girardo, who happens to be Braidamonte's uncle, receives a papal disposition to marry his own niece, and the other warrior woman takes on the domestic role of wife and mother (f. 77v). The confusion over gender, which had frightened Rinaldo when

he first saw his sister, has been resolved. Braidamonte has allowed her identity as a daughter and a wife to take precedent over her role as warrior woman. While the narrator asserts Braidamonte's ultimate femininity (and Christianity), Dama Roenza's gender-bending, her ability to express sexuality and physical force *in public*, earns her the status of a monster who needs to be destroyed at any cost. Like most female "buddy" stories, this one has a tragic end.

Despite such strategies to contain the threat to traditional gender roles created by the woman warrior, why do these characters, along with their brothers the wild men, occur with such great frequency in fourteenth and fifteenth-century epics? One could interpret these characters as a reflection of the growing independence of women in the early Renaissance, particularly in Florence.¹⁸ Yet, recent studies by historians such as Bellomo, Brown, and Klapisch-Zuber suggest just the opposite.¹⁹ In many ways, women's legal and economic status deteriorated rather than progressed during this period.

Instead of interpreting the warrior women, all of whom are Saracens, as a reflection of the status of women in Florence, it might be more fruitful to examine these texts from the perspective of recent theorists in gender studies such as Judith Butler. According to Butler, gender is a type of an achievement, a performance, which must be maintained. If not, we, like Formosa and Galaziella, often pay a price (Butler 273). Since gender is a cultural construction and not a biological fact, it is always being challenged and refigured to maintain the dichotomy of masculinity and femininity. If this is the case, then what challenge to traditional gender roles might have pushed the authors of the medieval Italian epic to adopt and develop the figure of the warrior woman?

These texts describe ideal masculinity as embodied in an elite class of knights of noble birth. Yet during the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the institution of chivalry in Florence undergoes two important changes. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, communes had used the title of knight, *miles*, to indicate a man's noble status and the privileges and responsibilities associated with such social rank (Salvemini 116). During the second half of the thirteenth century and the fourteenth century, however, the title of knight was no longer synonymous with the status of a noble. Communes, in particular Florence, began to dub non-noble men knights, especially men from the new mercantile and administrative classes (Salvemini 119). Towards the end of the fourteenth century and during the rise of the Medici family in the fifteenth century, the commune of Florence attempted to revive the traditional notion of chivalry as an institution for nobility by reserving the title for the sons of the most prestigious Florentine families (Salvemini 125). But as the historian Gaetano Salvemini

¹⁸ "Where the role of [the warrior woman] is treated seriously woman is correspondingly respected and active" (Tomalin 10).

¹⁹ For instance, Brown concludes that the number of working women in Tuscany dropped in the last half of the fourteenth century and that very few women entered the work force for the next two centuries (209).

notes, such a revival was impossible despite the ideological backlash against the advance of certain social groups (126). Although the commune had always expected knights to cover the expenses of maintaining a horse for combat, they did not necessarily need to ride it into battle, but could instead pay someone to fight for them. Throughout the thirteenth century, most knights did continue to ride their own horse into battle to defend the city. Only in the fourteenth century did that tradition change, as knights involved in mercantile and administrative occupations began to pay others to take their place in military conflicts (Cardini 27). By the fifteenth century, the jurists and other communal writers replaced the term *miles* with *equites* or *equitatores* because the majority of men fighting on horseback were simply mercenaries who did not hold the rank of knight (Salvemini 126).

This substitution of men of lower socio-economic status for titled patricians in the art of warfare threatened the elite masculine ideal that the knight represented. In a similar fashion, the gender distinction based upon the notion that the man is stronger and must protect the woman might have also been threatened when the patrician class was no longer defined by their ability to fight but by their ability to read, write, and crunch numbers. The fourteenth-century writer of short stories, Franco Sacchetti, describes the anxieties produced by these changes within the institution of chivalry and its masculine ideal; Sacchetti satirizes members of the non-noble mercantile and administrative classes who claim the title of knight even though they express their prowess with a pen rather than a sword:

Ecco bello esercizio cavalleresco! . . . che li notai si fanno cavalieri, e più su; e 'l pennaiuolo si converte in aurea coltellesca.
(491)

Sacchetti's satire valorizes notions of masculinity and nobility threatened by social changes; for similar reasons, it was common for young men of the urban patrician class to demonstrate their fighting skills in jousts held in Florentine piazzas. At times, readings of epics accompanied these chivalric games.²⁰ Whether included in this spectacle or not, the epic in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Florence also affirmed that the leaders of the new urban aristocracy truly were superior to workers and women — even if they no longer defended them with the sword.

Although authors of the early Italian epic used various means to contain the threat posed by the representation of Easterners, manual laborers, and women as knights, such strategies were not completely successful. At least one mercenary who worked for the Medici family, Giovanni Mazzuoli known as "lo Stradino," was an avid collector of Carolingian epics (Masaro n. pag.). While Stradino's

²⁰ Solterer notes that the inclusion of women in tournament literature "emerges as one factor distinguishing the earlier, brutal combats from the later, more 'entertaining' spectacles" (528).

contemporaries described him as if he were a wild man — ugly, ignorant, and strange — and the humanists poked fun at his collection of “popular” texts written in vernacular, his *armadiaccio*, the epics he owned glorified the military service for which the elite of Florence depended on him (Maracchi Biagiarelli 51).

Women writers also felt empowered by the literary depictions of the *virago*. One of the epics even explicitly encourages such identification. In the *Storia di Rinaldino da Montalbano*, yet another Saracen warrior woman, Queen Laura, decides to leave immediately to aid her Christian friend, Rinaldino, on the battle field after she remembers having read about Penthesilea and how the Amazon Queen arrived too late to save Hector (260).²¹ Learned women of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as Laura Ceretra and Moderata Fonte, often viewed themselves as *viragoes* “of the mind” (Labalme 5). Like Penthesilea, Galaziella, Formosa, or Braidamonte, they demonstrated *virtù* in a public forum, defying the strictly domestic role “of chastity and motherhood” prescribed for women by male contemporaries (Kelly 38).

In order to gain a voice, however, many of the women writers adopted the same strategies of containment that the male epic writers had used to limit the threat posed by the warrior woman. Like Formosa, some female writers sought to embody the important “feminine” virtue of chastity to counteract their threatening “masculine” voice (Schiesari 70-71).²² Still others viewed themselves as having transcended their own “inferior sex” — like Penthesilea, who overcame her “natural” moral weakness (Schiesari 81). Women writers might have been able to view the Amazonian warrior as a model who had earned a public role by imitating the actions of aristocratic men; but in doing so, they often needed to deny their own sexuality and their relationships with other women.

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²¹ I am indebted to Allaire for this reference.

²² Schiesari notes that although chastity “would bring with it a certain freedom, nevertheless that choice is limited since the very concept . . . is inscribed within the male-centered discourse of virtù as an ideal of masculinity that women could only achieve by denying their difference as women” (71).

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Alcina's Revenge: Reassessing Irony and Allegory in the *Orlando furioso*

To place an epic within its European context is not always to discuss such matters as its influence on or borrowings from other European epics. With this in mind, I would like to begin my discussion of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* with a brief consideration of what it might mean to talk about Virgil's *Aeneid* in a European context. In his *The Allegorical Epic*, Michael Murrin powerfully summarizes the *Aeneid* as having established "the great model for creative allegory in the West" (23). In other words, the *Aeneid* becomes fully "European" (or "Western") at the site of allegory: only through allegory (as practiced by its medieval and Renaissance commentators) was the place of the *Aeneid* insured within Europe's literary history.

One way to talk about an epic within its European context, then, is to assess its relationship with allegory — specifically, epic's success in generating a sustained and coherent allegory of its plot. In an era that valued Aristotelian unity and decorum, Cinquecento commentary on the *Orlando furioso* continually felt the pressure to align Ariosto's sprawling work with the great classics of European antiquity like Virgil's *Aeneid*. One authoritative means of assuring the *Furioso*'s enduring worth was to append allegorizations to it in a calculated continuation of the medieval tradition of allegorizing the pagan classics and thereby validating them as the foundation for what was beginning to take shape as a "European literary tradition." Such was, for example, Landino's intention for Virgil when he allegorized the *Aeneid* in 1480 (continuing the tradition of such allegorizers as Servius and Bernard Silvestris). No one knew better than Ariosto's defenders that allegorical commentary was a mark of literary prestige, particularly for a vernacular work. Thus, in the 1540's Lodovico Dolce and other Italian commentators on the *Furioso* began the practice of introducing Ariosto's cantos with summary *allegorie* that made (and, in so many instances, forced) meticulous distinctions between vice and virtue in the narrative.¹

The effort to "proclaim" the *Orlando furioso* as not just a classic, but a properly "European" classic centered on allegory. But Ariosto's epic posed a problem because it did not readily yield to allegory's impulses to move to higher meanings. Its prefatory *allegorie* notwithstanding, virtually every reader of the

¹ For an extensive treatment of early criticism of the *Furioso*, see Weinberg; more recently, see Javitch's excellent study, *Proclaiming a Classic*.

Furioso knows that Ariosto's poem was judged to be full of obstacles hostile to any overarching project to render it "Virgilian." As reported by one of Ariosto's more favorable commentators, Simone Fornari (whose two-volume *Spositione sopra l' Orlando furioso*, 1549, was the first extensive commentary on the poem), critics complained of such felicities as the poem's overabundance of *meraviglie* and fantastic episodes, the obtrusive presence of Ariosto as narrator and his persistence in presenting himself in the first person, the narrator's many annoying interruptions of his own narrative and their defiance of narrative decorum, etc.² Hence we encounter such oddities as Harington's "de-ironizing" of the authority of Bishop Turpin (i.e., his decision to take Turpin seriously), and even complaints concerning Ariosto's misleading title for his long poem — complaints that offered the title of *Ruggiero* as a more appropriate emphasis for the narrative's dynastic frame. In short, the real story of the *Orlando furioso* may be not so much the actual narrative itself as the many critical reactions against Ariosto's perceived excesses and the felt need of even his supporters to make the poem properly "allegorical" (i.e., properly "European").

Let us turn for the moment to, in particular, the controversy generated by Ariosto's narrative interruptions. In a series of important and well-perceived articles that appeared in the eighties, Daniel Javitch has pointed out that the inimitable *maniera ariostesca* possesses what could be described as its own kind of libidinal economy, whereby Ariosto's persistently frivolous narrative interruptions leave the reader, in Javitch's words, "unrequited but without the prospect of gratification" ("Cantus Interruptus" 71).³ For Javitch, the *Furioso*'s own characteristic "pleasures of the text" are structured on thwarted expectations, or on quasi-sexual denials of (narrative) pleasure. In such a scheme, the neo-Aristotelianism of the Cinquecento and its emphasis on narrative unity may be viewed as a denial of the libidinal economy of the *Furioso*'s interrupted narrative, judging Ariostan *jouissance* not as an invitation to textual pleasure, but merely as a series of structural defects.

What I wish to suggest here is that much of the *Furioso*'s allegorical commentary exists as a kind of disavowal (a repression? a forgetting?) of Ariosto's inherent *ingegno*, his wit — or, to phrase it more rhetorically, his irony. In other words, to talk more fully about the *Furioso* within its "European context," we may have to move beyond allegory to confront irony as the characteristic mode of Ariosto's tropological discourse. And such a confrontation necessarily entails an investigation of the rhetorical history of irony within its "European context."

² In his *Arte poetica* (1563), for example, Minturno levels the Cinquecento literary critics' most characteristic charge against Ariosto's long epic, complaining that the *Furioso* is "una gran massa di persone, e di cose" (qtd. Weinberg 2: 972).

³ See also his essays, "The *Orlando furioso* and Ovid's Revision of the *Aeneid*" and "Narrative Discontinuity in the *Orlando furioso* and its Sixteenth Century Critics."

In order to do so, we might begin not in antiquity but in the twentieth century with Paul de Man as perhaps the most prominent recent theorizer of irony and its place within the context of European literary history. Throughout the history of rhetoric, claims de Man, one can trace an "implicit and rather enigmatic link" between allegory and irony. For de Man (208-09), the trope of irony can readily be placed within a "European context," pointing, in Germany alone, to the works of Johann Georg Hamann, Friedrich Schlegel, Friedrich Solger, and E. T. A. Hoffmann, all of whom worried the connection between allegory and irony. In antiquity, it was the early rhetorician Quintilian who, in his *Institutio*, first forged a link between *ironia* and *allegoria* as both forms of "other-speaking," wherein one thing is said, but something else is meant. Even so, irony proved to be a troublesome figure for Quintilian, who, despite his judgment that allegory was considered to be a more prestigious kind of "otherspeak" than irony, worried the problem of whether irony is a species of allegory or something very different. Thus in his *Allegory and Violence*, Gordon Teskey argues, "It was recognized fairly early in European literary history that any effort to stabilize a theory of allegory with irony inside it will be undermined by irony's corrosively oppositional power. . . ." In other words, claims Teskey, irony "devours its host from within."⁴

But the practice of secular allegory for epic may never have come to discover the "truth" about irony that rhetorical theory discovered early on. De Man (210) identifies Quintilian as the first to describe irony as a trope that could dominate long narratives — and herein lies the significance of Quintilian's uncertainty about the relationship of allegory to irony for a study of the *Orlando furioso*. The long narrative of Ariosto's epic is a sustained illustration of Teskey's claim that irony always "devours its host from within," negating the impulses of allegory to rise to higher abstractions. The move by Cinquecento commentators to allegorize the *Furioso* constituted a refusal to negotiate the peculiar processes by which Ariosto's ironic tone seeks to empty itself of all content — a sustained avoidance of the irony that *is* the narrative space of the poem. When Dolce, Minturno, Harington, *et al.*, isolate what they judge to be most problematic about the *Furioso* (i.e., Ariosto's narrative interruptions, his breezy first-person intrusions into the narrative, his "red herring" title), what they are disavowing is, in essence, irony as the *Furioso*'s dominant rhetorical trope. The sheer length of Ariosto's poem may be the most convincing symptom of Ariostan irony itself — irony as pervasive, limitless, and uncontainable within the bounds of allegory. Irony, to echo Teskey, always "devours its host from within."

The urge of Renaissance allegorizers to curb the excesses of Ariostan irony

⁴ Teskey's forthcoming book constitutes an impressively learned genealogy of allegory from paganism to neo-classicism, and the scope of my paper is greatly indebted to his chapter, "Irony, Allegory, and Metaphysical Decay," in particular. The chapter is due to appear in the May issue of *PMLA*. I regret that it appeared too late for me to make page references to it.

— the urge to check irony's impulse to take on a referential life of its own -- is, for that matter, mirrored in much contemporary commentary on the *Furioso*. In the mid-sixties, Robert Durling devoted an entire chapter to Ariosto's ironic poet-narrator, but even he has perhaps too neatly summarized Ariosto's *disinvoltura* as a "mixture of moral earnestness and an unwillingness to seem too preacherly" (132) — a summary that falls short of a full encounter with the rhetorical enigmas of irony. And as well perceived as Javitch's analysis of Ariosto's narrative impulse of *cantus interruptus* is, he too recapitulates the urge to "allegorize" the *Furioso*, interpreting the poet's narrative interruptions not so much as ironic "play," but as "one of the poem's didactic aims, [i.e.] . . . to make us aware that in a world without constancy, . . . we must be elastic enough to bear the unpredictable frustration of our designs and aspirations" ("Cantus Interruptus" 79). A textual "world without constancy" is the discursive space of irony — and from Fornari to Javitch, it is Ariostan irony, I would claim, where critics struggle the most. Throughout the reception history of the *Furioso* (and, I say this with full appreciation that no one has done a more productive analysis of this reception history than Javitch himself), we continually see evidence of a kind of anxiety of interpretation — an anxiety that induces the critic to foreclose on the *Furioso*'s irony prematurely in order to find its didactic bedrock, or to *sublimate* the irony and abstract it into allegorical commentary. Either way, it would seem that it is now time to pose the simple question: how do we interpret Ariosto — or, phrased more broadly, how do we interpret irony itself? If, as Teskey has argued, "irony has an entirely negative relationship with interpretation," then I would suggest it is time for a reassessment of Ariostan irony's elusive relationship with allegory — and, indeed, with the act of interpretation itself. Such an investigation will, I hope, provide a new framework for assessing the *Orlando furioso*'s place within a European context

As Quintilian might have predicted, the longer an ironic narrative extends, the more unreliable the ironic narrator becomes — hence the anxiety with which Cinquecento allegorizers viewed Ariosto's obtrusive narrator. De Man observes, "The ironic language splits the subject into an empirical self that exists in a state of inauthenticity and a self that exists only in the form of a language that asserts the knowledge of this inauthenticity" (214). We may say that the *Furioso* exists, then, only in the narrative space of Ariosto's awareness of the inauthenticity of his own ironic language. For anyone interested in the place of the *Furioso* within a "European context," one of the more uncanny aspects of de Man's essay on irony might be the extent to which its descriptions of the tropic operations of irony seemingly describe much of the action of the *Furioso* itself. When, for example, de Man proclaims that irony "possesses an inherent tendency to gain momentum and not to stop until it has run its full course" (215), we are reminded of Orlando's seizure of Angelica's horse and the quasi-sexual fury with which he "rides" the horse for days until it drops from exhaustion (29.71). And

when de Man argues that irony is “unrelieved *vertige* . . . a reflection on madness from the inside of madness itself” (214, 215), are we not at the very threshold of Ariosto’s presentation of the entropic destructiveness of Orlando’s madness — a madness that, much more than Ruggiero’s search for his dynastic spouse Bradamante, is the structuring metaphor of the poem itself? When Ariosto named his poem *Orlando* and not, say, *Ruggiero*, the choice of title became the poet’s tacit acknowledgement that irony is a type of madness that envelops everything in its (non)referential grasp. And it is at this point that we can begin to appreciate the extent to which Orlando’s *senno*, his lost “wits” that become allegorized on the moon as the site of psychic wholeness and the object of Astolfo’s quest, cannot really be “allegorized” at all, but is the site of the madness that is irony itself. In Ariosto’s ironic epistemology, when Orlando, in one of the more memorable statements of ego *de*-formation in the literary history of epic, declares: “Non son, non sono io quel che paio in viso” (23.128),⁵ the paladin points to the very essence of irony as the trope of the divided self. He becomes the very epitome of the non-dialectical, ironic “self” that can proclaim itself only through the knowledge of its own inauthenticity. In short, allegory can only seek to conceal what an ironic consciousness already “knows” — and what irony “knows” is that it is uninterpretable because irony never is what it is, but rather is (in its restless disruptions of the narrative) always somewhere else.

Earlier I posed the (rhetorical) question of how we should interpret irony. At this point, I would like to narrow the focus of this question to the issue of irony’s challenge for a feminist critique. In other words, what is the place of Ariostan irony in feminist interpretations of the *Furioso*? Certainly in recent years feminist scholars have found themselves increasingly drawn to the *Furioso* because so much of the poem is an extended discourse about women, representations of female desire, debates on women’s social status, etc. The *Furioso* strikes the reader — the female reader, at least — as an often much more inviting text for feminist analysis than, say, its successor epic Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata* not simply because there is a richer variety of female characters (Homeric, Virgilian, Ovidian, Boccaccian) but also because the poet seems committed to a sustained discourse about women, particularly in the form of the so-called *querelle des femmes* and their extended meditations on the nature of womanhood. In the case of the *querelle des femmes*, however, women are drawn to the *Furioso* at their own risk. As readers of the *Furioso* are well aware, from Rinaldo to Rodomonte any number of Ariosto’s characters (not to mention Ariosto himself) are plunged into detailed debates about the moral worth of women, oscillating between, on the one hand, unbounded, almost grotesquely hyperbolic praise and, on the other, misogynistic rantings against female treachery and duplicity, rantings that, more often than not, result in a homoerotic bonding among many of Ariosto’s male characters — not to mention a

⁵ All citations of the *Orlando furioso* are taken from Caretti’s edition.

homeroptic bonding between the male characters and their sympathetic (if ironic) narrator, Ariosto himself.

In her excellent essay on the *querelle des femmes*, Deanna Shemek has skilfully traced Ariosto's contradictory deployment of this topos throughout the *Furioso*. What I would like to suggest further here is the extent to which Ariosto's unpredictable, contradictory oscillations between the topos of praise for women and the topos of women's inconstancy constitute the antithetical poles of irony itself. This is a simple enough observation, perhaps — but what I am suggesting is the crisis in interpretation that the *querelle* present. The obtrusive presence of the Ariostan narrator and his alternative praise and blame of women are a fitting enactment of the process by which irony always and inevitably takes on a life of its own. Let us focus on the representative moment when the narrator, rushing to the defense of women, accuses Rodomonte (who, following his loss of Doralice, is railing against “feminile ingegno”) of having lost his mind. As the poet claims, for every one or two treacherous women, there must be a hundred good ones: “e certo da ragion si dipartiva; / che per una o per due che trovi ree, / che cento buone sien creder si dee” (27.122). At this moment we can in no way view Ariosto's seeming “defense” of woman as an “interpretable” moment in the text — and this is the case even if we go to the opposite extreme and interpret his “defense” as an ironic “attack.” In other words, the reader (and, in particular, the feminist reader) is left with an anxiety of interpretation, for Ariosto is both affirming and negating the “truth” that virtuous women do exist. In short, the discourse of the *querelle des femmes* eludes interpretation because irony is (rhetorically) unlocatable. First here, now there — like the ghost of Hamlet's father — Ariostan irony also insures that so often “woman” herself is unlocatable in the *Furioso*, disappearing into the non-referential abyss that is irony. All of which is to say that irony (and, seemingly, Ariostan irony in particular) unravels the feminist project not because irony is, in some sense, inherently “misogynistic,” but because it is so frequently not misogynistic. Or, put another way, irony adduces the anxiety — without the verification — that praise of women may be the most misogynistic gesture of all.

Let us return to Shemek's interpretation of the *querelle*. She rightly interprets the contradictions of the *querelle* debates as Ariosto's complication of gender oppositions for the purposes of establishing “a reality more complex than reductive extremes,” such that, ultimately, the poet (who, as we know, himself claims to be frustrated in love) is “raising the issue of personal desire in all representation” (17). I would suggest that Shemek's argument that Ariosto is “raising the issue of personal desire in all representation” is both well perceived and a possible missing of the mark. Not unlike Javitch's interpretation of Ariosto's frequent interruptions of his narrative as “one of the poem's didactic aims,” Shemek's analysis of the *querelle* as Ariosto's calculated problematizing of “the issue of personal desire in all representation” may be itself a kind of allegorical gloss that forecloses on the thorny problem of irony's

uninterpretability. And, once again, we can see the extent to which the Ariostan commentator is tempted by a polemical "will to allegorize" as a kind of disavowal of the need to negotiate irony itself. The move I wish to make here is much humbler and less ambitious than the "will to allegorize." I simply wish to argue that the *querelle des femmes* is perhaps more productively viewed not as a rhetorical topos (i.e., that of "praise" and "blame") requiring an interpretive gloss, but as the discursive space of an irony flaunting its own non-referentiality. The *querelle des femmes* is structured by an ironic self that, to echo de Man, exists only in the form of a language that proclaims its own inauthenticity. The *querelle des femmes* cannot be interpreted because irony, as a non-referential language, cannot be "harnessed" for hermeneutic purposes. And despite the *Furioso's* surface charm and appeal and open invitations to feminist readings, it may be one of the most treacherous texts of all for any feminist hermeneutic: the *Furioso's* irony is so thoroughly disintegrative that the concept of "womanhood" itself cannot survive its corrosive reach.

But neither, as I wish to consider now, can the *Furioso's* irony be readily appropriated for a masculine hermeneutic — and this is no more aptly illustrated than in the much-discussed and certainly the most over-interpreted episode in the entire *Furioso*, the episode of Alcina and Logistilla. This particular episode has undergone a four-hundred-year history of over-interpretation; and, as I will argue, these over-interpretations tend to follow the same pattern, i.e., the attempt to force an Alcinian irony into a process of allegorical signification. For the remainder of this essay, I will not attempt another interpretation of this episode, but rather I propose to consider the extent to which the Alcina episode, we may say, is constituted within the enigmatic intersection of allegory and irony and the collision of their respective "European contexts."

As Albert Ascoli has argued at length, the Alcina-Logistilla episode is a virtual emblem of epic in a "European context": "The episode freely mixes elements of Dante's Christian askesis, Hercules' ethical-humanist itinerary, and Ulysses' 'neo-Platonic' journey. . . . [The episode is] thoroughly steeped in the great traditions of literary education (Christian, humanist, neo-Platonic)" (*Ariosto's Bitter Harmony* 169; 181). But it is an episode not easily interpreted within the larger context of the *Furioso* itself. As Ascoli himself has so perceptively observed, "the island of Alcina seems to have simultaneously a radically exemplary and a highly alienated position" with respect to the rest of the *Furioso* (123). Certainly, the episode is sufficiently "exemplary" for Giamatti to have devoted an entire chapter to it (137-64), but its "highly alienated" quality may be due to its status as an allegory — the episode as "highly alienated" because there are so few manifestly allegorical moments in the otherwise ironic *Furioso*. And because Logistilla's instruction of Ruggiero is perhaps Ariosto's most conspicuous use of allegory, it is almost as if Ariosto is offering us an extended meditation on, to echo Teskey, irony's entirely negative relationship with interpretation. Given that theories of allegory so often chose to

bracket the question of irony, it is significant that Ariosto deliberately constructs the Alcina-Logistilla episode as what we could refer to as the *Furioso's* primal encounter between irony and allegory, a sustained testing of Quintilian's claim that irony is little more than a species of allegory. If irony, as Teskey argues, does have "an entirely negative relationship with interpretation," then I would argue that it is this same negative relationship that has had to be (and still is) repressed in order (to echo Javitch) to "proclaim" the *Furioso* a classic. Thus, such allegorizers as Fornari, Ruscelli, Toscanella, Valvassori, *et al.*, focused a disproportionate, indeed a *symptomatic* attention on the "highly alienated" Alcina-Logistilla episode, so much so that Michael Murrin has argued that these allegorical commentaries on the Alcina-Logistilla episode alone contributed to the origin of secular allegory itself (54). But we must also consider the extent to which the "founding moment" of the origin of secular allegory is itself dependent on a peremptory suppression of the background "noise" of irony.

On Alcina's isle (where everything seems to be something else -- where whales are islands and plants are men), the irony manifests itself immediately with Ruggiero's encounter with the imprisoned Astolfo in the myrtle and Ariosto's extended parody of the bleeding branch, one of the previously more venerable topoi throughout the literary history of epic. With its echoes of similar episodes in Virgil, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Dante, the episode begins, then, within a self-consciously "European context"; but, scarcely possessing the psychic resonance of Virgil's tragic Polydorus or of Dante's eloquently mournful Pier delle Vigne, Ariosto's absurdly talkative myrtle may be the reader's surest indication that Ariosto intended Alcina's isle as the parodic *locus classicus* for the *Furioso's* irony.⁶ As we have seen, irony always affirms and negates the truth of its own discourse — and, predictably, the more Astolfo narrates his tale of the snares of the *fata* Alcina, the more Ruggiero becomes seduced by the very warning that is intended to repel him. And again, we have a foreshadowing of the prospect that irony always threatens what an allegorical discourse seeks to confirm.

As readers of the poem have frequently noted, throughout the episode the tone of Ariosto's narrator alternates unpredictably between naiveté and worldly wisdom, creating treacherous going for any interpretation that seeks to "ground" itself in easy alternatives between vice and virtue. The poet's tonal ambiguities notwithstanding, Cinquecento allegorizers of the *Furioso* forged rigorous distinctions between an Alcinian vice and a Logistillan virtue as the central moral opposition that structures the episode. In no uncertain terms, Fornari declared the Alcina-Logistilla episode to be the most important allegory in the

⁶ For an excellent treatment of Ariosto's ironic humor in this passage, see Kennedy. His essay is an extended appreciation of what Ascoli refers to as the "highly alienated" quality of the Alcina-Logistilla episode and an attempt to reconcile irony and allegory in the *Furioso* by arguing that Ariosto has achieved a kind of hybrid "ironic allegory."

Furioso, and Dolce interpreted Alcina allegorically as posing two moral states, i.e., Alcina as the assaults of the appetites (*gli assalti dell'appetito*) and Logistilla as the virtuous life (*vita virtuosa*).⁷ Fornari and Dolce thus established a long tradition within the reception history of the *Furioso* of interpreting the episode as an extended "rite of passage" for Ruggiero that is designed to instruct him in restraint and the avoidance of idle sensuality.

Ascoli acknowledges the extent to which interpretations of this episode have split into two poles, the so-called "Alcinian" critics and the "Logistillan" critics. Whereas the "Logistillan" critics focus on Logistilla as an agent of education and moral reform, "Alcinian" critics choose to celebrate the romantic sensuality of Alcina's isle (Ascoli 127).⁸ Ascoli argues that Ariosto is actually playing the two readings off against each other, offering a kind of "collision" of the conflicting impulses of sensual poetry versus didactic allegory. But it is also worth noting here that in the curious narrative rhythms of this surprisingly anti-climactic episode, the reader is never presented with any kind of clearly defined, decisive encounter between Alcinian vice and Logistillan virtue — which may be the most ironic outcome of the entire *Furioso*. If we view the episode simply as an *agon* between Circean sensuality and Logistillan restraint, then we run the risk of "repressing" the disintegrative power of irony. The real drama of the episode may not be the choice between an Alcinian vice and a Logistillan virtue, but rather the reader's repression of the primal encounter between allegory and irony.

The rather conspicuous absence of any kind of decisive defeat of Alcina in Ariosto's narrative marks the presence of this primal encounter; and it invites a careful consideration of just exactly what is the *fata* Alcina's vice that Logistilla must be the correction of. Through the aid of the magic ring that Melissa gives to Ruggiero, the Circean Alcina is revealed as physically loathsome:

Pallido, crespo e macilente avea
Alcina il viso, il crin raro e canuto:
sua statura a sei palmi non giungea:
ogni dente di bocca era caduto.
(7.73)

Thus, like irony itself, Alcina proves not to be what she is, but rather is something else. But what is the precise nature of her vice?

Before attempting to answer this, I would like to pose another question: Can allegory have a sexual politics? Or, more specifically, what is the precise relationship between a Logistillan allegory and Alcina's physical loathsomeness

⁷ For more on Fornari and Dolce as allegorizers of the Alcina-Logistilla episode, see Javitch 29, 33.

⁸ An example of a "Logistillan" critic would be De Blasi. The paradigmatic romantic "Alcinian" critic would be Momigliano.

that Ruggiero, with the aid of the magic ring, eventually unveils? The move from “vice” to “virtue” is structured on Ruggiero’s abandonment of Alcina and his journey to Logistilla; but the process of education (of a conspicuously “European” education) when he finally arrives there is itself brief, peremptory, fairly unrigorous (in actuality, involving little more than learning to control the hippogriff) — prompting a series of questions that get us to the heart of allegory’s arbitrariness and ineffectualness when it must confront irony. Despite the virtues of “right reason” or unity with the “Logos” or whatever else is presumably embodied in Logistilla’s name, how logical (as a deliberate pun on “Logistillan”) is the allegorical progression away from the ironic Alcina? Allegory as a form of “other-speaking” is traditionally based on a process of predication: the literal figure of allegory (in this case, the figure of Logistilla) does not just stand by itself — but rather is, always, intended to be something else. But even as, earlier, we asked the question of what is the nature of Alcina’s vice, so also are we at this point justified in asking: What precisely is Logistilla an allegory *of*? Or, to phrase the question another way, although Logistilla is a woman, to what extent has the allegory coded her “male” as a defense against Alcina’s (ironic) body?

Ruggiero’s progression to Logistilla (i.e., the progression to allegory itself) begins, not insignificantly, at the moment Alcina’s body is unveiled. In other words, because Alcina affirms and negates the truth of her own discourse, her body and, in particular, her lower body parts from her tresses to her feet are transformed into the discursive space of irony itself: the irony resides below her waist in a fleshly and, to Ruggiero, revolting materiality. It is in this fleshly materiality that allegory seeks to intervene and “mold” for higher purposes — and it is this intervention that becomes the primal scene of allegory’s not fully successful confrontation with irony.

To repeat the question I posed earlier: Does allegory have a sexual politics? Let us consider the precise nature of the signifying process by which the reader is intended to move from Alcina’s newly unveiled state of physical decay to a Logistillan allegory. Allegory, we may say, has its own libidinal economy — and that libidinal economy is distinctly male. In an Aristotelian scheme (feminine) matter always desires (masculine) form. In his *De generatione animalium*, Aristotle writes of the process of generation: “the male provides the form and the principle of the movement, the female provides the body, in other words, the material.”⁹ In a Lacanian scheme, for that matter, there exists a virtual ideology of paternity that, by means of the veiled phallus, insists on a denial of flesh. For both Aristotle and Lacan, then, the flesh cannot signify. The veiled phallus of paternity (perhaps as a severance from the womb and a denial of

⁹ *De generatione animalium* 729 a10. For an excellent discussion of the relationship between allegory and Aristotle’s metaphysics, see Teskey, to whom I am indebted for my own turn to Aristotle in the context of the Alcina-Logistilla episode.

the procreative mother) must intervene in order to produce a process of *signification* beyond the Real of fleshly materiality: over and against the materiality of the female body, paternity establishes itself as the signifier of vital perpetuation. But there is an attendant anxiety that underwrites both the ideology of paternity and the ideology of allegory. Teskey has argued, "It is the project of allegory to descend into the realm of matter, to capture it, and to lift it up onto the level of concepts. . . . Allegory must capture the heterogeneity of the material and convert it to form." Herein lies the central quandary for allegory: allegory needs a material substratum (*hyle*), matter, to survive — but if matter (the decaying flesh of Alcina) is not inherently symbolic or signifying (not even *in potentia*), how can allegory insure that it is read "properly" — how can allegory insure that it is read *allegorically*? How can Logistillan allegory logically emerge from the Real of Alcina's decaying flesh and arbitrarily endow it with a transcendent meaning? This anxiety over the nature of allegorical signification is what I take to be at the heart of Teskey's identification of the inherent *violence* that occurs when allegory tries to move to a higher level of abstraction; ideal abstraction in allegory is achieved only by the suppression of allegory's own materiality, a suppression of the material substratum — a material "stuff," if you will — that can never fully be incorporated as allegory moves to increasingly complex structures of meaning.

We may say, then, that allegory attempts to "gender" itself male, and in the realm of the Alcina-Logistilla episode the most serious literary challenge to that "gendering" impulse may be Alcina's physical decay (as her own version of an Aristotelian *hyle*). The unveiling of her loathsomeness establishes her as a figure of irony *par excellence* — which is why the move to interpret her allegorically (by Logistilla, by Fornari, by Dolce, etc.) seems so peremptory and so anticlimactic. Allegory needs something to be an allegory *of* — and thus Logistillan allegory seeks to "pin" a vice on Alcina. But does Alcina's unveiling reveal foulness — or is it simply the body of woman which the post-coital male needs to revile following (as Shakespeare would phrase it) "the expense of spirit in a waste of shame"? Since irony always empties itself of its own content, then we could ask: how wrinkled and foul *is* Alcina — or to what extent does the move to allegory require a *soma* (a debased female carnality) in order to constitute itself as allegory? The very name "Logistilla" suggests an anxious attempt to impose a logic onto Ruggiero's education — an anxious attempt to show that irony can have something other than an entirely negative relationship with interpretation. The real underlying anxiety for Logistillan allegory is not so much that Alcina is a monstrous woman corrupting the fantasy of male purity — but rather that her "corrupt" matter (the locus of the episode's irony) may not adduce a sufficiently transcendent meaning.

We could say that "Logistilla" is less an allegorical character in the narrative than Ariosto's "ironic joke" at the expense of allegory itself. If (in the case of the Alcina episode) irony *can* co-exist quite happily with fleshly decay —

if, in other words, irony is not in the least anxious in the face of its own uninterpretability — then, once again, we may state that irony “knows” what allegory does not. After Melissa frees Alcina’s captive plant-men, we see Ruggiero standing on a hot, sandy shore: “sol la cicala col noioso metro / fra i densi rami del fronzuto stelo / le valli e i monti assorda, e il mare e il cielo” (8.20). Not insignificantly, all that can be heard is the monotonous droning of the cicadas, intended, no doubt, as a symbol of the “real” sterility that underwrote Alcina’s isle. But we are well reminded here of Socrates’ dialogue, the *Phaedrus*. When Phaedrus, walking barefoot with Socrates along the bank of the river Ilissus, is counseled to remain silent during the divine chirping of the cicadas, it is a sure sign that the prime matter of the woods is teeming with the deities of an Orphic inspiration. In such a Phaedran scheme, Ariosto’s chirping cicadas come to symbolize the material “noise” of irony that Logistillan allegory seeks to suppress.

I would like now to return to the project of placing the *Orlando furioso* within a European context. Alcina’s “ironic” isle has no real geographical location — unlike so much of the rest of the *Furioso* which takes place in Europe. In such a scheme, then, we could argue that Alcinian irony is converted into allegory so that Ruggiero can (Aeneas-like) return to the completion of his epic destiny, and (in effect) so that the *Furioso* can take its place within a “European” tradition of the literary history of epic. But perhaps the episode’s greatest irony has nothing to do with the “allegorizing” of Alcina, but rather with her more all-encompassing role not as Ruggiero’s seducer, but as (ironically) his savior. On Alcina’s isle, Ruggiero squanders his days in post-coital bliss, but, as we also learn, his prolonged dalliance with Alcina is fully in accordance with the sorcerer Atlante’s plan to protect his ward from his future brutal murder by the Pontieri of the Maganza clan.¹⁰ As William J. Kennedy has cogently noted, “In view of this issue Alcina represents neither carnal delectation simply nor unrestrained sensuality totally, but rather an alternative, and a wholly attractive one, to Ruggiero’s destiny” (61). For Kennedy, in other words, the Logistillan allegory obscures the most “pungent ironic effect” of the episode (65): that it is not Alcina, but Logistilla who, by teaching Ruggiero to tame the hippogriff, ends Atlante’s control over Ruggiero and thereby pushes him towards his eventual doom. And once again, we are presented with compelling evidence that irony “knows” what allegory does not. What irony “knows” is that we can “interpret” Alcina indefinitely, but if we ignore the irony of her underlying (if inadvertent) role as Ruggiero’s protector, then our interpretation of the episode will never be complete. Although Ariosto at one point accuses Alcina of being a seductive Dido, in Atlante’s scheme, she is actually a new kind of redeemed Dido: the more she lures Ruggiero from Bradamante and the fulfillment of his epic destiny, the more she succeeds in saving his life. It is Ruggiero’s dalliance

¹⁰ For more on the role of Atlante as Ruggiero’s ward, see Quint, “The Figure of Atlante.”

with the ironic Alcina, then, not his instruction by the allegorical Logistilla, that, quite literally, saves his life. This is what irony "knows" and allegory does not. Viewed in this context, then, we should not be surprised when the long-forgotten Alcina makes her sudden and unexpected reappearance in the beginning of the *Cinque canti*, Ariosto's fragmented continuation of the *Furioso* that focuses on the origins of the Roland saga. In the final analysis, Ariosto's most ironic act of all may be the resurfacing of Alcina, angry at her abandonment by Ruggiero, as the principal agent of Ruggiero's destruction in the *Cinque canti*.

Levarsi Alcina non potea dal core
che le fosse Ruggier così fuggito:
né so se da più sdegno o da più amore
le fosse il cor la notte e 'l dì assalito;
e tanto era più grave il suo dolore,
quanto men lo potea dir espedito,
perché del danno che patito avea
era la fata Logistilla rea.
(1.19)¹¹

In this cynical work, where Ariosto has almost totally suppressed his playful irony in favor of allegory, Carlomagno's empire disintegrates, and Ruggiero (not to mention Bradamante, Orlando, and other heroes from the *Furioso*) is deposited several steps closer to death's doorstep.

Significantly, in this work it is Alcina who (ironically) serves as the powerful agent of a destructive allegory, enlisting and manipulating the allegorical figure of *Invidia* to incite the Maganzan Gano into a jealous frenzy at Ruggiero's expense. If, as we have seen, the *Furioso*'s many appended allegories proved to be an uncertain and even at times anxious vehicle for placing Ariosto's epic securely within a European literary tradition, the formerly "ironic" Alcina wields her explicit allegory (through the figures of *Invidia*, *Sospetto*, etc.) not in the *Furioso*'s dreamy *selva oscura* of romance but rather in a real, geographically explicit Europe (the Europe of Bavaria, Saxony, Silesia, Hungary, Rumania, and Serbia — not to mention Carlomagno's Paris). By shedding her ironic status and so thoroughly transforming herself into the agent of a destructive allegory (an allegory so thoroughly situated within a "European context"), it is as if Alcina seeks her revenge against Quintilian, Logistilla — anyone within literary history or the history of rhetoric who would seek to subordinate irony merely as a species of allegory. By becoming more "allegorical" than Logistilla, Alcina sees to it that allegory places epic more squarely within a "European" literary tradition than Logistilla could ever have imagined.

It is as if Alcina's resurfacing in the *Cinque canti* serves as a reminder to Ariosto's readers that irony always serves as allegory's "return of the repressed."

¹¹ Quotations from Caretti's edition.

Having been "forced" into allegory by Logistilla, Alcina will now (ironically) deploy allegory with a vengeance. The final irony of Alcina is that irony can be more "allegorical" than allegory itself — and this may be Ariosto's most ironic gesture of all.

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The Death of Brandimarte and the Ending of the *Orlando furioso*

The death and subsequent funeral of Brandimarte in the *Orlando furioso* (41.99-42.15; 43.164-185) are best remembered for the pathetic last moments of the hero. Brandimarte has been mortally wounded in the combat of three against three on the island of Lipadusa; he is himself largely responsible for killing in the same duel the pagan king Agramante, whom Orlando finishes off, thereby bringing an end to the war that Agramante brought to France — the epic subject of Ariosto's poem. Taking little joy in his victory, Orlando rushes to his dying comrade in time to receive Brandimarte's last words.

— Orlando, fa che ti raccordi
di me ne l'orazion tue grate a Dio;
né men ti raccomando la mia Fiordi. . . —
ma dir non poté ligi, e qui finio.
E voci e suoni d'angeli concordi
tosto in aria s'udir che l'alma uscìo;
la qual disciolta dal corporeo velo
fra dolce melodia salì nel cielo.¹
(42.14)

("Orlando, remember me in your prayers that are welcome to God; nor less do I commend to you my Fiordi. . ."; but he could not get out "ligi," and ended at this point. And harmonious voices and music of angels were heard as soon as his soul left him, which, freed from its bodily veil, rose to heaven amid a sweet melody.)

Brandimarte's voice and life break off before he can pronounce the last two syllables of the name of his beloved wife, Fiordiligi. Fiordiligi's later death, as she wastes away in a little cell that she has built next to the tomb of her husband in Agrigento (43.183-185), only adds to the sadness of their story; they are the emblematic loving and happily married couple of the *Furioso* and the reader may sense that their deaths reflect Ariosto's pessimism about both love and human happiness. Still, the pathos of the scene is at the very least distanced by the very bravura poetic effect that helps to create it: is it impossible for Brandimarte to say "ligi" because he dies or because only "Fiordi. . ." fits the stanza's rhyme scheme? In characteristic Ariostesque fashion, a literary self-

¹ All citations are taken from Caretti's edition of the *Orlando furioso*.

consciousness that draws attention to itself drains off some of the passage's emotional charge. Just how seriously should we take this affecting, heroic death?

The seriousness and significance of the death of Brandimarte may lie less in itself, as this sly nod of the poet to the reader suggests, than in its relationship to other heroic careers in the *Furioso*. In a poem where virtually all the pagan champions are slain, Brandimarte is the only major Christian hero, among the many paladins whom Ariosto inherited from Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, to die.² All of the mourning that might temper the Christian victory over the army of Agramante is thus focussed on Brandimarte — and this helps to account for the weight of pathos that his death acquires. There, but for the grace of God (or poet), go other paladins. In particular, Brandimarte is a stand-in for the poem's double heroes, Ruggiero and Orlando, both of whom live under a death sentence. Ruggiero, as the saintly hermit who baptizes him knows (41.61) but may not have informed him (41.67), will die seven years from the moment of his conversion — and it was this fate that caused Ruggiero's old guardian, the sorcerer Atlante, repeatedly to use his magic powers to keep the knight out of the action of the *Furioso*, to prevent Ruggiero's marriage to Bradamante that is

² The death of the Scottish prince Zerbino (24.75-85) is another outstanding Christian casualty, but Zerbino is a new character invented by Ariosto, not Boiardo; as is Lurcanio, the duped brother of Ariodante in the same Scottish episode of Canto 5, who is killed as the major victim of Dardinello's *aristeia* in Canto 18.54-55: Lurcanio appears to be "punished" here for having caused all the trouble to Ginevra (5.61f.), Zerbino's sister, earlier in the poem. The death of Zerbino and the subsequent martyrdom of his beloved Isabella (29.25f.) appear to be introduced into the poem precisely to provide doublets for the deaths of Brandimarte and Fiordiligi; Fiordiligi, in fact, meets the other couple at 24.53-56 and watches the duel between Mandricardo and Zerbino (24.58f.) that will prove to be fatal to Zerbino. Zerbino fights Mandricardo to prevent the saracen from taking the mad Orlando's discarded sword: he fights and dies, that is, as Orlando's faithful companion, the role that belongs in the poem more properly to Brandimarte. The dying Zerbino, we might say, prefigures the death of Brandimarte, just as the fate of Brandimarte will, in turn, prefigure the deaths of Ruggiero, Orlando, and Orlando's other faithful companion, Oliviero. Brandimarte's death is also pointedly contrasted with the survival at Lipadusa of Sobrino, the only African pagan who remained alive from among Agramante's vast host. Sobrino is the exception who proves the rule of the prophecy of the oracle of Apollino in the *Orlando innamorato*; the oracle had predicted that all those whom Agramante brought with him to France would perish (II.1.59), and Sobrino himself had urged Agramante to forego his planned invasion (II.1.51). (Being pagan, the oracle was of course mistaken; but by a double irony, it was not, unfortunately for the pagans, off by much.) It may be pointed out that the other notable exception to the mass liquidation of the African troops is Medoro, the infantryman who with his new wife, the princess Angelica, leaves for Cathay at 30.16. With Brandimarte and Fiordiligi, they are the other happily married couple of the *Furioso*; while the former die, Medoro and Angelica are expelled from its poetic universe to leave the field free for Ruggiero and Bradamante at its end. Finally, the treacherous Pinabello is killed by Bradamante at the end of Canto 22.97, avenging his attempt to kill her in Canto 2.75-76. As a Maganese traitor, the Christian Pinabello is equivalent to a pagan, and his death will be doubled by the later killing of Bertolagi (26.13; see also 46.68, a stanza that would be attached to the *Cinque canti*). I have discussed the significance of the killing of Pinabello, which introduces time and death into what was the exact center of the 1516, forty-canto version of the *Furioso*, in "The Figure of Atlante" 80.

the goal of the poem's dynastic plot. Orlando, as all readers of his story know, will die in his last stand at Roncevaux, the great, almost apocalyptic disaster of the Carolingian chivalric cycle. The deaths of both heroes, Ruggiero and Orlando, lie outside the *Furioso*; yet both, as we shall see, are also *in* the poem, for they are carefully paralleled and prefigured in Brandimarte's death. The poem thus *already* points beyond and questions the meaning of its ending, which may be shaped not so much by a triumphalist epic providence as by death itself — the end of all human narratives — that visits Christian and pagan alike.

1. Brandimarte and Ruggiero

The poem links Brandimarte and Ruggiero through the issue of conversion. It is Brandimarte, himself a convert to Christianity in the *Orlando innamorato* (II.13.45), who attempts to persuade Agramante to embrace Christianity and to forgo the duel at Lipadusa (41.37-41), only to earn the king's angry and dignified refusal to leave the faith of his ancestors (42-45). The episode is immediately followed in Ariosto's interlace narrative by the last-minute conversion of the drowning Ruggiero (46-49), who, his forces miraculously revived, manages to reach the island of the hermit who instructs him in Christianity and baptizes him (59). The juxtaposition sets off the fatalistic and heroically impressive defiance of Agramante with Ruggiero's abject surrender to God — the stripping away of human pride and self-reliance that is necessary for authentic conversion. And Ruggiero is physically saved, while Agramante will subsequently die at Lipadusa, his soul prey as well to Charon and damnation (42.9). But Brandimarte also dies at Lipadusa, and, as Albert Russell Ascoli, has pointed out, Ruggiero's own fated death seven years in the future — the physical as well as spiritual death that is set in motion with his conversion — is projected and enacted in Brandimarte's violent demise (Ascoli 362-63).

The *Furioso* further links Brandimarte and Ruggiero shortly before the events of Lipadusa by bringing onto the scene a minor character, the elderly Bardino (39.40-41):

era costui, Bardino che rapito
al padre Brandimarte piccolino,
et a Rocca Silvana avea notrito,
(39.41.2-4)

(he was Bardino who had abducted the child Brandimarte from his father and raised him at Rocca Silvana)

The story goes back to the *Orlando innamorato*, where we learn that Bardino had carried off the young Brandimarte from his father, King Manodante, sold him to the Count of Rocca Silvana, and then remained as the child's "governatore" (*Innamorato* II.13.36-38). These features of Brandimarte's story recall and textually echo what we are told of the childhood experience of Ruggiero, raised in a remote castle by Atlante, who, at the beginning of the *Furioso*, has once

again sequestered Ruggiero, in order to protect him from his fatal destiny, in another “ròcca” (4.29;31;32) in the Pyrenees.

Ruggiero ha nome, il qual da piccolino
da me notrito fu, ch'io sono Atlante.
(4.30)

(Ruggiero is his name, who was raised from childhood by me, who am Atlante.)

explains the old sorcerer to Bradamante. Moreover, when Bardino makes his appearance in the *Furioso*, he brings with him the news of the death of Manodante (called Monodante by Ariosto). He has come to recall Brandimarte to his father's throne, where he will rule over the richest kingdom on earth in the Isole Lontane, apparently somewhere in Indonesia in the poem's fantastic geography (39.62); according to the *Innamorato* (I.21.49), Manodante possessed more than half the riches of the world. By summoning Brandimarte away from the battlefield to a life of wealth and ease — and Bardino asserts that once Brandimarte has tasted the comforts of home, he will have no more desire for the life of knight-errantry (39.63) — he offers him a version of the same choice of Achilles that Atlante had tried to make for his ward Ruggiero: and Atlante had placed in his castle all the “music, songs, garments, games, and food” (4.33) that any heart or appetite could desire. Brandimarte, however, resolves to finish out the war (39.63). Like Ruggiero, he rejects an early or premature retirement from the heroic stage proffered by a surrogate father; but unlike Achilles (*Iliad* 9.410-416), neither Brandimarte nor Ruggiero seems *aware* that this choice entails dying young, another kind of early exit.

Finally Brandimarte and Ruggiero are linked by the marriage plot of the *Furioso*. As the emblematic faithfully wedded couple of the poem, Brandimarte and Fiordiligi mirror its central couple, Ruggiero and Bradamante, whose marriage, the foundation of the Este dynasty, is the much-delayed goal of Ariosto's narrative. Fiordiligi's continuing quest for Brandimarte (8.88f.) parallels at a minor level the quest that Bradamante undertakes for Ruggiero throughout the poem. By the same token, Fiordiligi's mourning over her dead husband in Agrigento contrasts with the festivities that accompany the final wedding of Ruggiero and Bradamante achieved in the poem's last canto: a contrast all the more deeply felt in the original 1516 version of the poem, where Brandimarte's funeral in Canto 39 directly preceded the nuptial celebration in Canto 40. One marriage is violently severed as another is joined: the narrative juxtaposition is another ominous reminder that the wedded happiness of Ruggiero and Bradamante is already living on borrowed time.

2. Brandimarte and Orlando

Brandimarte is the beloved companion of Orlando. Orlando's reaction to his death at Lipadusa is compared to the wrathful grief of Achilles seeing his cherished

Patroclus slain at Troy (42.2); Brandimarte's funeral at Agrigento (43.166f.) is modelled on the funeral that Aeneas gives to Pallas at *Aeneid* 11.22f. in Virgil's version of the Achilles-Patroclus relationship. There is already a sense in the *Iliad* that the death of Patroclus anticipates the future death of Achilles that Homer's epic will not narrate, and that the hero can see his own death mirrored in the death of his friend — especially when, as Ariosto's evocation of the scene insists, Achilles sees Patroclus wearing "il falso elmetto" (42.2.5), dressed, that is, in Achilles' own armor. The epic model may similarly implicate Orlando in Brandimarte's death. But alongside this classical model, the most celebrated epic moment of Ariosto's Carolingian tradition depicted both the hero and his beloved friend perishing together in battle: the deaths of Orlando and Oliviero at Roncevaux. It is this moment and these deaths that Brandimarte's death at Lipadusa symbolically anticipates: it is no coincidence that his companions at Lipadusa are Orlando and Oliviero.

Brandimarte, in fact, displaces Oliviero in the *Furioso* from his traditional role as Orlando's best friend. Oliviero plays a distinctly minor part in the poem until Lipadusa, though he has already been paired with Brandimarte as a fellow prisoner of Rodomonte (35.53; 39.33). Oliviero's emergence into a prominent role in the *Furioso* at the occasion of the duel at Lipadusa is, in fact, designed — as are a whole series of textual details in Cantos 42 and 43 — to spell out a parallel between this duel and the future battle and disaster at Roncevaux, where both he and Orlando will be killed, especially the Roncevaux depicted by Luigi Pulci in the *Morgante*.³ And Oliviero's presence also points to the way that the *Furioso* has doubled his character with that of Brandimarte: a Brandimarte who at Lipadusa must suffer the death that awaits Oliviero. Brandimarte's famous last truncated words are modelled on the death-scene of Pulci's Oliviero: as Orlando finally agrees to blow his horn, his boon companion expires on the battlefield of Roncevaux:

Disse Ulivieri: — Omai non ti bisogna;
l'anima mia da me già vuol partire,
ché ritornare al suo Signore agogna. —
E non poté le parole espedire,
come chi parla molte volte, e sogna,

³ Monteverdi argued some time ago for the link between Lipadusa and Roncevaux, but to the Roncevaux of the *Chanson de Roland* rather than to that of the *Morgante* ("Lipadusa e Roncisvalle"). Monteverdi points out, 405, that the horn Orlando will famously blow at Roncevaux is mentioned for the only time in the poem when the hero accepts the challenge of Agramante to fight at Lipadusa at 40.57, and he also notes, 404, the importance of the presence of Oliviero. He reaches a conclusion about Brandimarte's death that is similar to the one that I am putting forward here: "Dalla morte del prode e fedele Brandimarte, dal contegno della sua Fiordiligi, prevediamo quale sarà la morte di Orlando e la sorte della sua Alda. Così, ripeto, l'Ariosto non ha bisogno di condurre la storia di Orlando sino all'a fine, proprio come nessun bisogno ebbe Omero di condurre alla fine la storia di Achille" (408).

e bisognòe quel che e' voleva dire
 per discrezion intender: che Alda bella
 raccomandar volea, la sua sorella.⁴
 (27.68)

(Oliver said, "Now there is no need for you to do so; my soul already wants to leave me, for it desires to return to its Lord." And he could not issue the words, as one who speaks many times and dreams; and it was necessary to understand by one's judgment what he wanted to say: that he wanted to commend Alda the Fair, his sister.)

"Non poté": this Oliviero does not even get a chance to commend Aldabella, his sister and Orlando's wife, while the voice of Ariosto's Brandimarte breaks off in the middle of the name of his commended Fiordiligi.⁵ Both heroes die in the arms of Orlando. And at Roncevaux, Orlando will die as well.

For Pulci's Orlando himself similarly commends Aldabella — "Alda la bella mia ti raccomando" (27.130) — in his seemingly interminable death scene in the *Morgante*. And, like the "suoni of angeli concordi" heard at Brandimarte's death, the moment when Orlando's soul finally leaves his body is accompanied by the sound of heavenly music: "certa armonia con sì soavi accenti,/ che ben parea d'angelici instrumenti" (155). Brandimarte's last moments thus echo the deaths of both Oliviero and Orlando in the *Morgante's* version of Roncevaux.

Ariosto, moreover, underscores the parallel between Pulci's Roncevaux and Lipadusa through the figure of Rinaldo, who in both the *Morgante* and the *Furioso* arrives late at the battlefield. Pulci's narrator self-consciously acknowledges that in the traditional literary accounts Rinaldo did not fight at Roncevaux at all: he claims to base his revisionary version on the writings of one Arnaldo provided to him by an Angel — Angelo Poliziano (25.115), his fellow poet in the Medici circle. Rinaldo is brought from distant Egypt to the rescue of Charlemagne — "E bisognava che Rinaldo vegna,/ se non che Carlo non avea rimedio:" (25.170) — through the agency of the devil Astarotte with whom he enjoys en route a long and digressive disquisition on the freedom of the will and other matters (25.200-332). He arrives at Roncevaux in time to rout the saracen forces (26.90), but not soon enough to prevent the death of Orlando; he is present to watch and mourn his cousin's protracted last moments. In the *Furioso* Rinaldo is in Basel (42.67) when he learns of the upcoming battle at Lipadusa: he hastens to join Orlando, but his travels through Italy similarly open up into the digressive episode of the Mantuan host and the ensuing stories recounted to him by the boatman on the Po (42.70-43.144). Try though he may,

⁴ All citations of the *Morgante* come from Ageno's edition.

⁵ The possibility of a recollection of Pulci's episode was broached and rejected by Rajna in a footnote of *Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso* (559). Rajna noted that the inability of Pulci's Oliviero to get out the words of his commendation of Aldabella was a parody of a much more diffused conventional scene, and he was unwilling to agree that Ariosto had imitated it in the death of Brandimarte. I believe that Rajna was too hasty to dismiss the parallel (and the echo of "non poté"), especially given the other echoes of Pulci and other Roncevaux poems in the episode.

Rinaldo is thwarted by adverse winds that make him arrive late at Lipadusa — “ma di poco” (43.150) says Ariosto’s equally self-conscious, malicious narrator of this near miss in the poem’s narrative connections. (The same narrator remarks that Rinaldo, arriving just after the duel has ended and when Brandimarte is already dead [151], has reached the island for the fruit course or rather after the banquet had been removed from the table [153].) Ariosto has shaped his fiction so that Rinaldo’s long journey and narrow failure to arrive in time at Lipadusa, where he might have taken the place of Brandimarte and saved him from death, recalls the journey of Rinaldo to Roncevaux in the *Morgante*. The parallel points in the *Furioso* to the future death of Orlando, a death foreseen and decreed by the poetic tradition and a death that Pulci, for all of his manipulation of that tradition, could not avoid; his Rinaldo may fight at Roncevaux, but he still cannot save Orlando’s life.

The funeral of Brandimarte at Agrigento also suggests future as well as present mourning. Orlando compares Brandimarte’s sacrifice to that of the Decii and Marcus Curtius (43.174), just as Pulci’s Orlando invokes the same figures of Roman republican virtue to urge his men and himself to martyrdom at Roncevaux (26.37-38).⁶ There is something excessive in Orlando’s grief-stricken assessment of Brandimarte’s valor and the significance of his loss.

Oh quanto, quanto il mio signore e zio,
oh quanto i paladin da doler s’hanno!
quanto l’Imperio e la cristiana Chiesa,
che perduto han la sua maggior difesa!

Oh quanto si torrà per la tua morte
di terrore a’ nimici e di spavento!
Oh quanto Paganìa sarà più forte!
quanto animo n’avrà, quanto ardimento!
(43.172-173)

(O how much, how much, my lord and uncle, o how much the paladins of France have to mourn for! how much the Empire and the Christian Church, which have lost their greatest defender! Oh how much terror and fear your death will remove from our enemies! O how much stronger Pagandom will become, how much daring and spirit it will acquire!)

The recollection here of Aeneas’s words over the body of Pallas — “quantum / praesidium Ausonia et quantum tu perdis, Iule!” (*Aeneid* 11.57-58) — is woven into a lament for Christendom’s greatest defender, a title that seems less appropriate to Brandimarte, fine warrior that he may have been, than to Orlando himself. It is Orlando to whom, according to Ariosto’s St. John, God granted superhuman, heroic strength “a difesa di sua santa fede” (34.63.5), on whom,

⁶ See the note in Bigi’s edition of the *Orlando furioso* 2:1804.

Fiordiligi says, empire and church depend — “a cui la chiesa et l’alto imperio debbe” (31.42.6). Pio Rajna pointed out that Orlando’s words parallel the lamentation that Charlemagne, his lord and uncle, makes over Orlando’s own body in the early verse redaction of the Roncevaux story, the fourteenth century *Spagna in rima*.⁷

o campion sommo del cristiano stuolo,
per te con pena nel mondo rimagno
e sconsolato con gravoso duolo.
Oggi per la tua morte abassa e cade
tutta la speme di Cristianitade.
(*La Spagna* 3:122; 37.4)

(O greatest champion of the Christian army, on your account I remain with sorrow in the world, and inconsolable with heavy grief. Because of your death all the hope of Christendom today falls and is laid low.)

And here is a variant version of the same speech:

Chi difendera la gente christiana
o ualoroxo e nobile chapitano
della tua forza la gente paghana
tremaua tutto lo monte e llo piano
e ora la tua persona sie uana. . . .
(*La Spagna* 3:324)

(Who will defend Christian peoples, o valorous and noble captain? before your strength the pagans trembled on mountain and on plain, and now you are without life and power. . . .)

Such premonitions that Orlando’s death will put an end to pagan fears and that Christendom may fall with its champion appear to be the model for the similar eulogy that Ariosto’s Orlando makes over the body of Brandimarte. The echoes should make the reader of the *Furioso* feel a premonition of a different kind. Where Brandimarte now lies lifeless Orlando will one day lie himself, the slain defender of the faith mourned by a newly weakened and apprehensive Charlemagne.

3. Death and Closure

The dying Brandimarte thus does double duty as a stand-in for both Ruggiero and Orlando, fatally linking together the twin heroes of the *Furioso*. Both are left standing at the close of the *Furioso*, but the knowledge that their days are nevertheless numbered darkens our sense of the poem’s ending and of the two epic plots that give that ending shape: plots with which Ruggiero and Orlando are respectively associated. Ariosto turned to Virgilian epic formulas in order to

⁷ Rajna notes this parallel in *Le fonti* 560n4.

impose narrative goals and closure upon the apparently open-ended chivalric adventures he inherited from the *Orlando innamorato*, and thus to distinguish the *Furioso* from Boiardo's romance.⁸ These goals are twofold: the marriage of Ruggiero and Bradamante that founds the Este dynasty and — once Orlando regains his sanity and rejoins the forces of Charlemagne — the martial victory of Christian Europe over Islamic Africa, a victory so total that virtually no pagan escapes. The two plots come together in the final episode of the poem, when Ruggiero must fight and kill Rodomonte, the last remaining African hero, at his wedding feast: the accomplishment of the war plot is made to appear a necessary condition for the fulfillment of the marriage plot.

The killing off, one by one, of its pagan knights as so many impediments to closure accompanies the epic progress of the *Furioso* and the shutting down of its digressive and dilatory romance subplots — so much so that one begins to suspect that the meaning of this closure may lie less in the geopolitical and dynastic settlements it achieves than in the disclosure of death itself as the ending that romance, with its potentially endless series of adventures, attempts to put off and keep out of sight. This suspicion is that much stronger because the fantastic nature of "history" in the *Furioso* Ruggiero is a patently fictional avatar of the Este and the war between Charlemagne and Agramante never took place — lends a peculiarly conventional status to the epic formulas that bring it to a close: we are invited to stand back with the self-conscious poet and look hard at the conventions themselves. The simultaneous elimination of pagan champions and of romance adventure, moreover, seems to identify such adventure itself as pagan, or at least as a genre in which both pagans and Christians, inasmuch as they act as individuals, can participate on an equal footing — more precisely, in the celebrated opening scene of the poem, Rinaldo and Ferraù share the same horse (1.21-22) — while epic demands an ultimately fatal sorting out of the adversaries of different faiths. Ariosto might already be taken to provide a model for Tasso's assimilation of romance wandering and pagan error in the *Gerusalemme liberata* (Zatti 51; Quint, *Epic and Empire* 35-41).

But the lone Christian casualty Brandimarte, the apparent exception that

⁸ Quint, "The Figure of Atlante." I have argued, 86-87, that "epic and romance do not so much differentiate the *Liberata* from the *Furioso* as the *Furioso* from the *Innamorato*." And I also relate this superimposition of epic ending on the endlessness of romance to the disclosure of a death that is virtually absent from Boiardo's poem: "The impetus towards closure of the *Furioso* reveals an authentic human temporality masked by the open-ended *Innamorato*. The *Furioso* will discredit its own framework of providential history and with it the divine retribution which systematically kills off its characters. But those characters die all the same, and by their deaths produce the ending of the poem. . . . Ariosto, by putting an end to both the *Furioso* and the *Innamorato*, affirms the reality of death. The affirmation is cheerless enough but genuine: mortality is one unassailable fact in a poetic world where everything else human is illusion and madness. The 'meaning' disclosed by the temporal unfolding of Ariosto's narrative is the unfolding of time itself, and its ending is the end to which all men must come" (84). For a different view of the status of death in the poem, see Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony* 361-76. On epic and romance, see Zatti, *Il furioso* 1-37.

proves the rule of the poem's epic discrimination between Christian and pagan knights, also points to future violent deaths on the Christian side, those of Ruggiero, Orlando, Oliviero — too many exceptions for the rule to hold. Thus, epic closure, no less than the romance adventure, may evade or conceal a reality of death. To be sure, the transhistorical goals of the epic ending of the *Furioso* — the political triumph and perpetuation of Christendom, the foundation of the Este lineage, even the possibility of salvation dramatized in Ruggiero's conversion — project meaning beyond the individual's death, while romance adventure merely puts off a death to come: the adventure remains immersed in its immediate present and may be humanistically "pagan" — and timebound — for that reason.⁹ But the overarching epic narrative cannot paper over the extent to which it is produced to respond to the more universal sense of ending that is human mortality itself, a death that may be the unacknowledged goal of all narratives we tell about ourselves.¹⁰ In the death of Brandimarte, Ariosto's poem concedes that this death cannot simply be displaced onto the losing, pagan side but will be experienced — whether more meaningfully or not — by the Christian heroes themselves: and Ruggiero and Orlando will die sooner rather than later. Qualifying its achieved ending, and perhaps all epic endings, as premature and provisional, the *Furioso* already anticipates and suggests the logic of its dark sequel. The *Cinque canti* not only renew epic hostilities just when Charlemagne and his people had thought the danger was over (2.33-35), but in the edict of the primordial Demogorgon — "che sia Orlando, sia Carlo, sia il lignaggio / di Francia, sia tutto l'Imperio spento" (1.30) — announce their own quasi-apocalyptic sense of ending: the death of a poetic universe.

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⁹ In the "The Figure of Atlante," I argued that Ariosto's bringing of death into the romance world of the *Orlando innamorato* contained a critique of the *quattrocento* humanism motivating the idea of adventure in Boiardo's poem; I have now suggested that the *Furioso* describes this same adventure (and the humanist attitude towards time that may inform it) as "pagan." I am again struck by the way that Ariosto has anticipated Tasso — and both have anticipated Burckhardt. See Zatti, *L'uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagano* for the argument that the pagans of the *Gerusalemme liberata* embody an earlier humanism (with whom the poet shares a not-so-secret solidarity.)

¹⁰ "Death is the sanction of everything the storyteller can tell," writes Benjamin in "The Storyteller" 94.

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**De-Cephalizing Rinaldo:
The Money of Tyranny
in Niccolò da Correggio's *Fabula de Cefalo*
and in *Orlando furioso* 42-43**

At the risk of making too much of a whimsical title, the de-cephalizing of Rinaldo might simply mean Rinaldo's prudent decision (*Orlando furioso* 43.7-8) not to repeat the fate of Cephalus, the mythical prince of Athens who — according to Ovid and other ancient writers — was persuaded by the dawn goddess Aurora to disguise himself and test his wife's fidelity with an offer of money, but succeeds only in offending her and driving her away.¹ In this sense, the two tales narrated to Rinaldo in *Orlando furioso* 43, which imitate aspects of the story of Cephalus, follow-up Rinaldo's rescue by the knight of *Sdegno* from the monster of *gelosia*, which had attacked Rinaldo after he heard from Malagigi of Angelica's departure with Medoro toward Cathay. In terms of the poem as a whole, the episode of Rinaldo's jealousy forms a pendant to the central account (cantos 23-24) of Orlando's jealousy and madness, as well as to the adventures of Rinaldo in Scotland early in the poem.² It also fits in logically, as Ceserani remarks, before Rinaldo's role in bestowing his sister to Ruggiero in marriage, in the episode added for the 1532 edition.³ Of course, in the 1516 edition the episode of Rinaldo virtually concludes the poem, and is thus Ariosto's "last word" on a number of important themes including fidelity, ingratitude, and the folly of possessive jealousy.⁴ Like Ariosto's fifth satire, which discusses the dangers and attractions of taking a wife, the tales told to Rinaldo offer cautionary advice about marriage in the Renaissance tradition of cassone panels, bedroom wall frescoes, and the *Fabula de Cefalo* of Niccolò da Correggio, first represented

¹ For Ariosto's versions of the story of Cephalus, in addition to the version of Niccolò da Correggio, discussed below, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.672-865; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, ch. 184; probably Boccaccio, *De claris mulieribus*, ch. 26, and *Genealogia deorum gentilium* 13.65.

² The Rinaldo-Orlando juxtaposition is traditional, going back to the distinction of Roland as *proz* and Oliver as *sage* in the *Chanson de Roland*. For Rinaldo's representation as *prudente* see Santoro, 1973: 93-98. See also Pool, 221-237, esp. 230, and Casadei 1992: 90-96.

³ Ceserani 1984: 500-502 identifies a "marriage theme" in the poem and in this episode. The whole Rinaldo episode, the longest in the poem (42.29-43.151, or 234 *ottave*) has rarely been discussed in depth, but see: Moretti, 65-78; Negri, 135-39; Santoro 1983, 133-54; Weaver, 384-406; Wiggins, 30-37; Zatti, 55-57; Sherberg, 81-89; none of these discusses the tales told to Rinaldo in detail. Schiesari (1991) offers a feminist, psycho-analytic interpretation, with emphasis on the serpent imagery.

⁴ For the final position of the episode, see Moretti, 66, Pool, 221, and Casadei 1992: 87-91; this effect is of course blunted with the 1532 additions. On infidelity and ingratitude, see note below.

at Ferrara on St. Agnes' eve (21 January) 1487 as part of a marriage celebration, and long recognized as a proximate source for Ariosto's *novelle* in canto 43.⁵

But de-cephalizing might also refer to Ariosto's transformation of the literary economy of the *Cefalo*, a courtly fable in which the virginal purity of the bride is restored by superhuman agency: accidentally killed by her husband, Procri is brought back to life by the Goddess Diana, purified of past infidelity and jealousy. In Ariosto's poem, the first story narrated to Rinaldo concludes with the departure of the indignant wife and the inconsolable remorse of the woeful knight, her husband, who narrates it: it offers no solution to either the scandal of infidelity or the tyranny of jealousy. Rinaldo then hears what is essentially the same story again, and in the account of Argia, Anselmo and Adonio (significantly, this time the characters are given names) he demolishes expectations of perfectibility and offers a model for the restoration of the spousal bond based on acknowledged mutual fallibility. Illustrating Rinaldo's observation that to wish to know a wife's fidelity is like Adam's mad desire for the forbidden fruit (43.8), the second tale makes Anselmo's fall into cuckoldry, hypocrisy, murderous intent and intended sodomy a domestic *felix culpa*: to be fallen and forgiven emerges as preferable to remaining unfallen, because it dispels the pretensions of virtue. Although Ariosto uses supernatural means (the sorceress Manto, who assists Argia and Adonio) to resolve his marriage-tale, the private pact of Anselmo and Argia could not be more different from da Correggio's solution to jealousy and infidelity in the *Cefalo*: first perturbed by the lust of a goddess, Aurora, for Cefalo, the human couple is also finally redeemed by a powerful deity, Diana; a *dea ex machina* intervenes to transform human tragedy into divine comedy.

In bringing the solution of the novella into the hands of the couple themselves, Ariosto's allusions to the *Cefalo* and its epithalamic motives anchors a movement "back home" to the local and familiar in the *Furioso*, preparing the poet's return to port in 46.1-19.⁶ Widely recognized by the Ferrarese and Mantuan courts of his day as embodying the ideals of courtesy and chivalry (and a poet to boot), da Correggio probably helped inspire the settings of the tales in canto 43, which, unusually for the *Orlando furioso*, take place in

⁵ For parallels with the *Cefalo*, see Rajna, 569-589, esp. 571-72. On the *Cefalo* in the context of an Ariostean "marriage theme" (the Bolognese *Cefalo* of 1475 was also produced for a wedding), see Ceserani 1984, 502. There are discussions of the *Cefalo* and of Niccolò da Correggio in Luzio and Renier 1893, 205-64; 1893, 65-119; 1900, 233-35; Arata, 170-199; di Benedetto, 161-82; Pyle, 169-180; and Benvenuti and Sacchi, 201-07. Though not a stage success, the *Cefalo* went through four editions before 1516, and through Ariosto's mediation the story of Cephalus had considerable influence in European literature (Tasso, Cervantes, La Fontaine). Lavin, 260-287 shows the Cephalus story furnished subjects for cassoni and mural decoration (Piero di Cosimo, Bernardo Luini, Baldassare Peruzzi) conforming to its domestic, conjugal emphasis.

⁶ In the 1516 edition, the poet's approach to the dock followed the river-journey of Rinaldo; see Sherberg, 88, and Casadei 1992: 96-100.

named, historical cities.⁷ At the thematic level, Rinaldo, once freed from his passion for the fugitive Angelica, is brought to think of his wife Clarice; at another level of interpretation, the tales provide a staging area for Ariosto's meditation on his own most intimate loyalties. Thus the emphasis on the marital and domestic in the tales is more than nuptial and dynastic: it is economic in the broadest sense, implying the administration of the feudal household, thought of as the extended Renaissance *famiglia* as well as the marital chamber and its possible dangers. This return to a domestic economy has literary as well as political implications: Ariosto acknowledges the turn away from the tragic already underway in the *Cefalo*⁸ by invoking the urban and "mercantile" register of Boccaccio's *Decameron* as a counterweight to the high-serious traditions of Dante, Petrarch, and the martial epic.⁹ These developments suggest that the real counterpart to Rinaldo's internal (and introspective) navigation of the Po valley is Ruggiero's journey on the hippogriff early in the poem — as, in fact, the contiguity of this episode to the poet's return in the 1516 edition might suggest. As Ruggiero's far-flung episode is organized by the "great circle" of the circumnavigation of the globe, Rinaldo's episode, though including widely diverse material, is unified by reference to and travel on the river: not only does the fluvial setting link the siting of both *novelle* (Mantua, on the Mincio, and Ferrara, on the Po del Primaro), but the Po is necessarily the river into which the fountain of chaste women discharges its waters: thus all the strands of the episode flow together in the figure of the river.¹⁰

The phrase "literary economy" beginning the previous paragraph is adopted advisedly; Sergio Zatti recalls Rajna's observation that the second of the tales is constructed according to narrative principles of reciprocal gratitude and retributive justice: Argia's revenge against her hypocritical husband, itself made possible by Manto's gratitude for the kindness shown her by Adonio, "compensates" the demonstration by the woeful knight that most wives are unfaithful.¹¹ I think one

⁷ *Orlando furioso* 43.32; Ferrara is named at 42.53.4; Mantua is identified at 43.70.8-9. For the focus on Mantua and Ferrara, see Marinelli, 88, 98, 161.

⁸ Pyle, 169-180 and Benvenuti and Sacchi, 201-207 have demonstrated that the *Cefalo* departs from the tragic genre represented for the late Quattrocento by the Orpheus story, although the Orpheus tale remains an explicit influence (cf. 4.177: "questa mi fu più ch'al suo Orfeo Euridice"). The *Cefalo* explicitly avoids both tragedy and comedy (cf. *Argomento*, 49-51), suggesting that it is an instance of the "satirical" genre (Benvenuti and Sacchi, 205).

⁹ Rajna, 589 identified Ariosto's borrowing of this part of the tale from Boccaccio's tale of Bernabò and Ginevra and of Federigo degli Alberighi and Nastagio degli Onesti. For the two tales in contrast with a tendency toward a heightening of the epic and tragic registers in the late cantos of the poem (the death of Brandimarte, Ruggiero and Leone), see Moretti, 65-69.

¹⁰ On this "great circle" in Ruggiero's adventure, see Ascoli, 185-201 (esp. 198) and Zatti, 148. In another sense, the Po is a figure for the flow of eloquence, of literature (Ariosto refers, over the course of the episode, to Homeric, Virgilian, and Dantean origins in particular): for this figure of Tasso's inspiration in the *Gerusalemme liberata*, see Quint, 1983: 92-132.

¹¹ Zatti, 55; Rajna, 571. Thus the tale has the logic of a *contrappasso*.

can go further and say that the “economic” in the fiscal sense is also a thematic concern of the whole episode. The tales narrated to Rinaldo are not only a “marriage group” about chastity and jealousy; they are also about the power of money. By showing how money corrupts conjugal fidelity, the tales are in one sense part of Ariosto’s attack on avarice throughout the poem. But I hope to show that Ariosto’s analysis of money goes beyond a conventional denunciation of cupidity to analyze how great wealth corrupts the mind, personal relations, and the rule of the state.¹² As Moretti notes, the reference to Rinaldo’s usual lack of funds, mentioned by Ariosto just as the episode concludes, as the count quite exceptionally tips the storytelling boatman — an exemplary vignette urging patronage for tellers of tales, perhaps — may be taken as a clue to the whole episode. Having been healed of jealousy, Rinaldo is also healed of his traditional avarice; the two vices are closely linked in the two tales he is told.¹³ If Rinaldo’s consideration of the test marks the narrative center of his extended episode, the thematic center of the episode is outlined in the exordium to canto 43, with the narrator’s condemnation, with citation of Virgil and Dante, of the “ingorda fame d’avere,” the hunger for gold which dishonors not only women, but also both sackers of cities (men of *fortitudo*, knights like Rinaldo’s host) and sages (men of *sapientia*, like the judge Anselmo) alike. By including men as well as women among the victims of avarice, Ariosto generalizes avarice into a universal scourge and prepares the narrative reversal of the second tale, in which Anselmo’s hypocrisy is exposed.¹⁴ Subtler corrosive effects of excessive and misplaced liberality, historically a masculine fault, subsequently emerge in the tales themselves. Both the anonymous Ferrarese lover of the first tale and Mantuan Adonio in the second, like Boccaccio’s Federigo degli Alberighi and Nastagio degli Onesti, spend themselves into beggary in their attempts at seduction; Anselmo’s wife is in turn endowed with all his wealth to prevent her corruption, as if money could fence her around. The Ferrarese lover in the first tale spends the treasure of the emperor Tiberius (43.58, 43.75), but the price her husband would place on her chastity is higher than that, indeed “quanto oro al mondo si possiede” (43.14). These vast sums are embodied in the inestimably costly palaces that frame Rinaldo’s episode (cf. 42.73 and 43.132.8, comparing the two): the first, housing the fountain of chastity, would exceed the treasure of two princes (so that we think immediately of the *delizie* of the Estensi, of the

¹² For the economic in Ariosto see Moretti, 65-69, and, for Ariosto’s understanding of the Golden Age as “pre-economic,” Chiampì, 340-50; see also Zatti, 137-49.

¹³ Rinaldo’s greed is a feature of Boiardo’s *Innamorato* rather than the *Furioso*, but his poverty and rapacity are part of the tradition about him; see *Innamorato*’s note to *Orlando furioso* 43.147; and Ferrau’s taunts at 2.4.4.

¹⁴ Compare Horace, *Odes* 3.16: “Aurum per medios ire satellites / et perrumpere amat saxa potentius / ictu fulmineo”; the exemplum of Eriphyle, who betrayed her husband Amphiaras for a gold necklace, follows. Moretti, 69-77 emphasizes the theme of avarice against Santoro, who downplays it.

palaces of the Gonzaga dukes); the second, the palace magically erected by Manto the sorceress, might not be bought for all the gold under the sun. The presence of vast sums points to the folly of setting a price on chastity or fidelity, moral qualities inexpressible as monetary sums, but also hints at the imbalance between the rich and powerful and the "privato uom."¹⁵ Virtually unlimited wealth, we will see, is the dangerous prerogative of kings and tyrants.

More systematically, the alabaster fountain in the palace of the woeful knight (*Orlando furioso* 42.73-94), representing eight 16th-century exemplars of chastity bearing cornucopias, establishes, if obliquely, the association in courtly culture of female chastity with generosity and abundance (*castitas* and *caritas*). Manifesting *bellà*, *castità*, and *grazia*, the eight women expand the classical trio of Graces that represent the circulation of gifts and benefits ideally binding society.¹⁶ The ladies and their poets represent specifically that exchange of poetic encomium and the lady's *guiderdone* or *mercede*, a reward both economic and, usually in sublimated form, erotic. The cornucopias they hold, which Ariosto links to the horn of the goat Amalthea who nourished the infant Jove (42.80.1) signified for antiquity both generic abundance and the gifts of Fortune: in short, wealth.¹⁷ Thus, although the "fecondo canale" flowing from the cornucopias may suggest the fertility of the ladies,¹⁸ it indicates primarily their patronage of poets, especially notable in relation to Elisabetta Gonzaga, Beatrice and Isabella d'Este, and Lucrezia Borgia.

The premiss of the tales, of marriage as a condition in which the wife is vulnerable to temptation and the husband to jealousy, is fully implicit in the selection of ladies and poets.¹⁹ All the women named are married (one is shown widowed), but not to the pedestal poets who sing their praises. Thus they share in the peculiar tension of married women who suffer to be admired by other men without sacrificing their reputation for chastity. None of the ladies — except

¹⁵ Cf. 42.73.8: "né a privato uom convenia tanta spesa." Tiberius, whose wealth is used as a point of comparison for both Mantuan and Ferrarese extravagance, was a type of the tyrant; see Stam and Partridge, 128-29.

¹⁶ For the graces in Renaissance thought and iconography, see Wind, 26-35; for *grazia* as an "architectonic" concept for courtly relations of reward and obligation, see Saccone 1983, 45-68. The Graces are mentioned as residing in Ferrara at 43.58.7; see also 46.85.1, attending the birth of Ippolito. Huffmann, 115-16, notes a reciprocity of power between the poets and patronesses of the fountain of chastity.

¹⁷ Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 127-28, and Horace, *carmen saeculare*, 56-60. Mention of Amalthea makes a link with the name of Melissa in the first tale, since Melissa was the name of Amalthea's sister, who also fed the infant Jove on milk and honey (see Lactantius, *Institutes* 1.22). Shell 1982, 44 points out that cornucopias are common devices on ancient coins; the cornucopia is a classical equivalent to the feeding vessel, the Grail, of later medieval romance.

¹⁸ Though not all were mothers; Elisabetta Gonzaga's marriage to Guidobaldo da Montefeltro produced no issue. Huffmann, 114, notes that this passage outlines "a web of Este influence" because all the women are kin, by blood or marriage, to the Estensi.

¹⁹ For the identifications, see Ariosto, 1975: 730-32; also Casadei 1986: 53-93.

perhaps one — are “donne ingrate,” like Lidia in canto 33; their special grace lies precisely in having negotiated the co-ordinate dangers of unchastity and ingratitude.²⁰ Of course, the system of circulating gifts and benefits — the order symbolized by the graces — instances an idealized form of the seigneurial economy of the Ferrarese and Mantuan courts, one in which courtier-poets like Niccolò da Correggio and Ludovico Ariosto were thoroughly enmeshed, though in distinct ways. Recently, Sergio Zatti has pointed to instances throughout the poem referring to compensation, both at the thematic level (exchanges of *mercede* and *guiderdone* and knight-service) and regarding the poem’s own place in the system of obligation and reward obtaining between the courtier and his lord, made explicit at the very outset in the third *ottava* of the poem.²¹ As every reader remembers, Ariosto’s epic is the poet’s payment of his debt to his patron Ippolito, but also in turn an illustrious gift to the cardinal, one that would enhance his fame: a gift, moreover, that by the poets’ own testimony in the *Satire*, in *Capitoli*, and in the *Lettere*, did not produce a satisfactory rejoinder in either preferment or money. *Pro bono malum*, the famous epigraph in the 1516 edition, has sometimes been taken to refer to the ingratitude of Ariosto’s patrons toward his labor.²² Whatever its exact significance, the motto brands the poem with the notion of an expected reciprocity that has failed. The topic of the unreturned outlay forms part of the broader concern of the poem with ingratitude and violation of trust, and places the tales told to Rinaldo in cantos 42-43 squarely at the heart of Ariosto’s chief thematic concerns.²³

In addition to the effigy of Niccolò in the temple of Chastity (42.92.3-4), the name of da Correggio is especially in evidence near the conclusion of the *Furioso*: the name appears in the very first place in Ariosto’s valedictory greeting to his well-wishing public in 46.3.5 (“Mamma e Ginevra e l’altre da Correggio”) where Niccolò’s daughter Beatrice, called “Mamma,” and Ginevra, a niece or daughter-in-law, and several other women of his family (five in all) are identified. Such mention, along with the adaptation of the *Cefalo*, makes the end of the 1516 *Furioso* a sustained gesture of homage to Ariosto’s elder contemporary in the Este circle. With close ties of patronage and kinship with the Milanese, Mantuan, and Ferrarese courts, and estates near Alessandria and Parma, Niccolò da Correggio personally summarizes the court culture of the Po

²⁰ For Lidia’s ingratitude as an exemplary instance of denied mutuality, see Zatti, 139-142.

²¹ Cf. 1.3.5-6: “quel ch’io vi debbo, posso di parole / pagare solo in parte. . . .” On the poet’s debt, see Zatti, 147-48, citing Saccone, 1978, 15 and 1983, 47-49.

²² For recent discussion, see Saccone, 1975, 201-47; Santoro 1983: 153-157; and Ceserani 1988: 172-86.

²³ For “ingratitude in virtually every episode of the poem” see Durling, 1965: 167; Ascoli, *passim* but especially 284-304; Zatti, 142 suggests *fedeltà* as the sole stable exchange value in Ariosto’s system: “La fedeltà è, nell’ideologia ariostesca, la sola forma positiva e legittima di scambio: patto di corrispondenza che vincola al reciproco e celebra il sempre uguale.” Bonifazi, 1975, makes *infedeltà* the leading motif of Este-Ariosto relations.

valley of an earlier generation (indeed Ariosto associates him, as a poet, with the Po, itself a key presence in the two tales of canto 43).²⁴ In Ariosto's narrative, the emphasis on the local noted earlier comes to a focus with Rinaldo's anticipation of the glories of Ferrara (43.56-59, added 1532), including the palace of Belvedere; in this connection it may be recalled that Niccolò da Correggio probably had a hand in the program of Psyche-frescoes Ercole I had painted in Belriguardo, which preceded Alfonso's Belvedere among Este *delizie*.²⁵ There are good reasons why da Correggio might have interested Ariosto beyond the fact that he knew him and his family. Ariosto, himself an innovator of the Ferrarese stage, surely understood that the presentation of the *Cefalo* in the ducal palace in 1487 had marked an epoch in Renaissance theater.²⁶ Both men shared the admiration and patronage of some of the same court ladies, such as Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia; and both suffered from hard treatment by their patrons after loyal service (da Correggio from Ludovico il Moro, and later from Ippolito and Alfonso d'Este).²⁷ The implicit comparison of Niccolò and Ariosto himself as members of successive generations in the extended Estensi dependency is built into the architecture of the fountain of chastity itself: Niccolò da Correggio helps to prop up the ill-starred Beatrice d'Este in seventh position among the gracious ladies, immediately contiguous with a single unnamed poet and unnamed lady. The anonymous figures were recognized by Michele Catalano as referring to Ariosto and Alessandra Benucci, secretly his mistress from 1513 until 1529, when she became his wife, again secretly.²⁸ The contiguity suggests the juxtaposition of da Correggio and Ariosto as courtiers in successive generations: although of roughly the same class, it is the differences in rank and prestige that stand out: Niccolò da Correggio, frequently Boiardo's companion on official *cavalcate*,²⁹ and for many years the loyal servant and effective and experienced counselor of Ercole I; Ariosto, on the other hand, always short of

²⁴ See 42.92.6-8: "ambi faran tra l'una e l'altra riva / fermare al suon de' lor soavi plettri / il fiume ove sudâr gli antiqui elettri."

²⁵ Gundersheimer, 258-61. That the palace of the woeful knight evokes the Gonzaga palace of Revere is a traditional gloss; see de Negri, 137 and Reynolds (Ariosto 1975, vol. 2, 730); it might be preferable to posit a more generic relation of literary to historical palaces.

²⁶ For this event, and its relation to the 1486 performance of the *Menechini*, see Benvenuti and Sacchi, 201-07. As an aristocratic amateur, da Correggio produced plays and entertainments for the courts of Este and Gonzaga, anticipating Ariosto's own dramaturgical activity for the Estensi.

²⁷ Da Correggio's documented role in mediating the breach between Giulio d'Este and his brothers Ippolito and Alfonso would also have interested Ariosto. See Ariosto's first eclogue; Arata, 71-77; Bacchelli, 405, 429, 468, 472; and Dionisotti, 327-40.

²⁸ As Reynolds points out (Ariosto 1975, vol. 2, 731-32), Alessandra's dress recalls Ariosto's first view of her as he recounts it in the first canzone (vv. 100-01): this is thus a Petrarchan re-evocation of the first sight of the lady.

²⁹ In a sense, da Correggio, the kinsman, friend, and imitator of Boiardo, takes the place of the author of the *Innamorato* in the temple of Chastity. For the ambiguous position of Boiardo in Ariosto's poem, see Quint, 1979: 77-91.

money to support his large number of dependents, was relegated to a series of minor, even servile duties, and his great poem was ridiculed by its principal dedicatee. From these distinct social and economic positions the two men take up distinct positions on the question of aristocratic generosity. Niccolò da Correggio, like his older contemporary Boiardo, was an independent lord who might offer his literary production as a gift to his courtly audience without expectation of a cash stipend in return; he can thus distinguish himself from the unsavory buying and selling that transpires in his play by offering the work to the audience as a gift, free of charge, explicitly declaring that it transcends the monetary economy (*Cefalo, Argomento*, 54: "Io ve la dono, e non per precio d'oro"). Ariosto, though more strapped for funds, consigns his work to his patron and describes it as the bare minimum of a debt he can never fully repay. And rather than distinguishing himself from the action of his tales, Ariosto takes pains to include his narrative persona as a correspondent in the erotic and economic tangle of the tales told to Rinaldo.³⁰

How the relation of Ariosto to Alessandra might itself be implicated in the marriage-tales emerges from a rapid comparison of the tales with Ariosto's fifth satire, where he directly discusses the question of choosing a wife. Ariosto's advice in the *Satire*, readers suggest, may profitably be read in the context of his relationship to Alessandra Benucci.³¹ Of the half-dozen strong parallels with the language and situations of *Orlando furioso* 42-43 and the *Cefalo*, the most striking is the poet's warning that attractive wives will be tempted to, and some will, commit adultery (v. 166: "Molti la tenteranno" and v. 179: "L'altra, più saggia, si conduce all'opra / secretamente. . ."). The poet counsels discreet surveillance, but cautions that its discovery will provoke the wife's just disdain and resentment (vv. 286-88: "ma studia farlo cautamente, senza / saputa sua; che si dorria a ragione / s'in te sentisse questa diffidenza").³²

Ariosto had particular reason to see his own predicament in the situation of the *Cefalo* and the *novelle* narrated to Rinaldo, since he was himself in some sense an adulterer, his relationship with Alessandra having begun, according to

³⁰ The contrast in the "economies" of the *Cefalo* and the *Furioso* may also reflect changes in the Ferrarese economy under Ercole I, when the city prospered, but also entered a period of deficit financing exacerbated by the duke's vast expenditures. It was under Ercole, Gundersheimer points out (204, 283) that the custom of selling state offices, widely practiced in other despotisms, was introduced on a large scale; and it was under Ercole (Gundersheimer, 220-25) that the Este shifted from the employment as court officials of aristocratic amateurs like Boiardo and Niccolò da Correggio to the use of academically trained professionals; Ariosto would presumably have fallen midway between these two groups.

³¹ For the fifth "Satira" (1519) linked to this episode, see the hints in Poole, 222; also de Negri, 137, Santoro 1983, 148, and Schiesari, 141.

³² See also v. 274: "che mostri non fidarti anco riprendo . . ." and compare *Orlando furioso* 43.93, Argia's resentment that her fidelity is impeached by Anselmo. Ariosto even refers to a "conte Rinaldo" (v. 138) his cousin, three times unhappily married, with inevitable allusion to the Rinaldo of the *Furioso*.

his own testimony, during St. John's day in Florence in 1513, before Alessandra Benucci became a widow (1515).³³ Ariosto himself had made his lady an unchaste wife: the story told in the *Cefalo*, of a husband who tests his wife by masquerading as her adulterous lover might thus have resonated strongly with Ariosto in 1515 or so. The narrator's enigmatic reference near the beginning of canto 43, "intendimi chi può, che m'intendo io," hints at this implication; placed at the conclusion of the exordium, describing the universal reach of greed, it immediately precedes Rinaldo's choice, constituting a blush of self-incrimination, like Rinaldo's blush at the shaming of Anselmo at the conclusion of the boatman's story (43.144.3-4), or indeed Anselmo's blush when his wife witnesses his hypocrisy (43.140.6; see also 43.38.1-4). In fact, given that the exordium is inserted while Rinaldo is thinking over attempting the test of the cup, we might conclude that the narrator is here mulling over the same problem.³⁴ Finally, the Anselmo story, in which Anselmo proves guilty of an infidelity worse than Argia's, can be seen as a narrative rendition of the narrator's acknowledgement, in the exordia, that it is hypocrisy to reproach others and not to consider one's own folly — the folly being, of course, that of jealous love, for throughout the poem the narrator's service to his lady is the chief explicit instance of his participation in the madness depicted in the poem. This self-incriminating gesture of the narrator, one of Ariosto's most typical, illustrates Horace's famous tag: "de te fabula narratur" (Satires 1.1.70). It would seem incontestable that, both in the guise of the "figure of the poet" who laments his lady's conventional *schivezza* and *sdegno* throughout the poem (and who is, he confesses, as mad as his protagonist Orlando), but also as the historical author himself, the secret lover and secret husband to Alessandra Benucci, Ariosto is an implicit deuteragonist of the marriage-tales told to Rinaldo:³⁵ the gesture of "bringing it all back home" brings the poem back to its author and his lady. What is the meaning of these final, *Cefalo*-inspired *novelle* in the poem, that the narrator so emphasizes his kinship with his protagonists, with their vulnerability to the power of money?

Looking more closely, the problem in both tales is the commensurability or exchange rate between the surrender of chastity and a gift of goods or money: in contemporary terminology, the uneasy and dangerous linguistic, symbolic, and psychological overlap of courtly *mercede* (cf. 43.14.2, 37.8, 103.1, 109.7, 115.8) — the lady's grant of favors to her lover or admirer — and the

³³ See Ariosto's canzone "Non so s'io potrò ben chiudere in rima" (Ariosto, 1967, 1201) and Ceserani, 1966.

³⁴ Ceserani, 1984, 501 observes that Rinaldo's journey down the Po and subsequently to Urbino and Rome reiterates Ariosto's own historical itinerary as a courtier and diplomat. On the narrator's possible identification with unsavory characters of the poem (e.g. Marganorre) see Ascoli, 392.

³⁵ See 24.3.1-2: "... tu vai / l'altrui mostrando, e non vedi il tuo fallo," usefully co-ordinated with 43.144.8: "alla medesima rete fe' cascallo, / in che cadde ella, ma con minor fallo," said of Anselmo.

meretricious, the merchandising of the lady's favors for money.³⁶ Like Boccaccio's Filippo Balducci, who brings up his son in rural solitude in the attempt to interdict fleshly concupiscence, the father of the woeful knight's wife (born illegitimate of a matron seduced with money) and Anselmo both attempt to preserve the chastity of their wives by removing them from *commercio popular* (43.14, 92) — and fail, once the wives are offered sufficient incentives. However, the buying of the wives is a far from simple transaction: like Ariosto's lament over the wide extension of *avarizia*, which annihilates wisdom and valor, the selling of virtue is the symptom of a deeper problem reflected in Ariosto's complex panegyrics of the Estensi: the problem of political tyranny and its effects. Ariosto knew that the *coup d'état* was at the distant or recent origin of the seigneurial despotisms, which were technically tyrannies, despite claims of legitimate investiture by Emperor or Pope in remote ages.³⁷ Ariosto's episode exemplifies how a natural exchange-system based on visible "real goods" — the kind of economy of which Plato and Aristotle could have approved — fails to resist the power of money.³⁸ In the analysis Marc Shell abstracts chiefly from Plato and Aristotle, a money economy favors tyranny because money, unlike jewels, chattels or real estate, is an invisible form of wealth which can be exchanged secretly, without witnesses.³⁹ Such invisible manipulations both facilitate and exemplify the action of tyranny, which controls the lives of subjects through "invisible" surveillance (e.g. spies and informants); economically, tyranny is expressed by a "chrematistic" or profiteering mercantilism, and linguistically by sophistry, which merchandises rhetorical skill without respect for the truth. Transposing this analytical scheme to Ariosto's poem, the tyranny of money suggests on the one hand the tyranny of the *signorie* — Este, Sforza, or Gonzaga — whose power and wealth permit the lord to overbalance the system of duties and rewards with his vassals and courtiers; on the other hand the development of a literature of flattery that

³⁶ For *guiderdone* and *mercede* in the larger system of exchange in the poem, see Zatti, 139-40. Note the seducers' formula: the ladies can obtain wealth in exchange for something worth nothing at all, their virtue (43.112.8, 138.8); for the question of confusion of spiritual goods like grace and charity and the fiscal, see Shell, 1982, 36, 43. The classic treatment is Simmel, 355-94.

³⁷ The Este claim to Imperial investiture of their possessions was strong; but their claim to Ferrara, a Papal dependency, was the result of a staged coup in 1264 (Gundersheimer, 25-29). The claims of the Gonzaga to the lordship of Mantua and that of the Sforza to Milan were still weaker: on Milan and the Visconti-Sforza, see now Ianziti, Lubkin, and Robin; on Mantua and the (humbly-born) Gonzaga, see Stam and Partridge, 86-90.

³⁸ Howard Bloch argues that the 13th-century shift from coined money to "money of account" (the new fiduciary instruments of early capitalism) coincided with the diffusion of the Grail topic in French romance (cited in Shell, 1982: 40); but as Marc Bloch (1967) pointed out long ago, clear transitions from "natural" (e.g. barter) to money or credit economies are not easily found in the historical record. Still, Shell's arguments (1978, 1982) suggest the importance of perceived or idealized oppositions between the various forms assumed by value — goods, coins, credit.

³⁹ Shell, 1978, 11-62 ("The Ring of Gyges").

legitimizes spurious seigneurial genealogies and justifies the despotism, a literature not much unlike the Renaissance dynastic epic itself.⁴⁰

It is possible here only to outline how a critique of the "economy" of the Este despotism might be relevant to *Orlando furioso* 42-43. Like much else in the episode, the problematic of money and gifts in the Ferrarese court is traced back to archetypal origins. The emphasis in the cantos on the mythical or pseudo-historical origins of Ferrara and Mantua (Manto founded by the sorceress Manto, fleeing from destroyed Thebes, founded by Cadmus and the earth-born sons of serpent-teeth; 43.11, 79, 97); Ferrara by Trojan, subsequently Paduan exiles fleeing from Attila (43.32). Such myths formed part of the stock-in-trade of dynastic epic, including the *Furioso* as well.⁴¹ As the Gonzaga derived their stock from Jove himself, the Estensi drew their mythic descent not only from Hector (Ruggiero's ancestor) but also from Hercules, the namesake of Ercole d'Este, mentioned at 43.59.⁴² Rinaldo, floating down the Po, anticipates future Ferrarese civilization and imagines the fruits of heroic exploit (43.56-59) deployed along the shores of the Po, in new Este Golden Age that is compared to the garden of the Hesperides, whose golden apples were retrieved, according to classical myth, by Hercules;⁴³ but — we recall the lecture of St. John on the unreliability of writers and the appetite of despots for flattery — this "golden age" might also be thought of as a consequence of Hercules' opportune piracy in stealing the apples from the daughters of Atlas and removing them to Ferrara.⁴⁴ If the flowering of "liberali e degni studi" (43.60.8) echoes humanist allegories of Hercules' visit to the garden as an acquisition of wisdom, traditional

⁴⁰ For Ariosto's flattery of the Estensi as part of his courtly duties, see Zatti, 147-49; also Reynolds (Ariosto 1975: 16-22); Ascoli argues that Ariosto's flattery of Ippolito in particular is double-edged. Borso and Ercole I d'Este were notoriously susceptible to obsequious flattery; cf. Gundersheimer, 127-32; 202-05.

⁴¹ See the Estensi genealogy presented to Bradamante in canto 3.23-62 especially; also 13.59-73; 35.6-9; 37.1-22, 41.61-67, including the story of the Ateste invested by Charlemagne; and 46.79-98, the life of Ippolito d'Este. For poems like the unfinished *Borsiad* of Tito Vespasiano Strozzi and the *Ercoleide* of Gian Mario Filelfo, see Reichenbach 22, 25; there existed also a *Fatiche d'Ercole*, by Pietro Andrea de' Bassi (pub. 1473); see Ascoli, 58.

⁴² According to Sabbadino d'Ariento (cited in Gundersheimer, 256), a room in Belriguardo contained a mural depicting Hercules; note the double use of Ercole in 43.59. Ippolito is identified as the son of Ercole, "Erculea prole," in 1.2.1; see Ascoli, 52-56. Hercules was also important to the Gonzaga; Mantegna frescoed the labors of Hercules in the *camera picta* at castello San Giorgio in Mantua.

⁴³ Alcina's and Logistilla's gardens, versions of that of the Hesperides, are regarded as evocations of Alfonso's Belvedere: see Reynolds (Ariosto 1975:18).

⁴⁴ The prophecies of future Estensi glory in Canto 35.6 contain exact parallels of language with 43.60-61: the earlier passage is located in the middle of the episode on the moon, which calls encomiastic poetry into serious question; see Quint, 1983: 81-92; Ascoli, 1987: 264-304; also Zatti, 127-169, where this question is situated with respect to the poems' "economy" of debt and compensation.

"historical" decodings of the myth also identify him as a plunderer.⁴⁵ Thus Ariosto might at once praise the Este contribution to learning, while reminding us with reference to fabulous palaces that the several Este *delizie* — Belfiore, Schifanoia, Belriguardo — represented escalating expenditures that precipitated a fiscal crisis, and heavy taxation, under Ercole I d'Este.⁴⁶

The ambiguous Herculean background is more than a question of mythic allusion turning on the name of Ercole. For, as Ceserani noted, the several references to the "Po cornuto" in canto 32 effectively make Rinaldo's journey a repeated "turn to the right" along a series of forks, or *bivia* in the river, which Ariosto describes repeatedly as "horns."⁴⁷ Since the choice of virtue and vice at the *bivium* was indelibly associated in the Renaissance with Hercules's choice at the crossroads,⁴⁸ Rinaldo's itinerary, fluvial and narrative, down the Po valley literally emblazons the geography in cantos 42-43 with a Herculean *impresa*, and marks Rinaldo's choice before the testing cup as a domestic form of the heroic choice at the *bivium*. Ariosto's permutation on the word for the "horns" of the river undercuts the heroic blazon: for, like the unifying effect of the Po itself, coursing through the variegated episode of Rinaldo's journey, Ariosto's permutation on *cornio* runs a gamut from the Cornucopia (42.80) to the *cornea* of the river (figuratively, the river's "horns" of power: 43.32, 53-54, 63) to the "cimier di Cornovaglia" (42.100). The "reduction" of the high-serious and the focus on domestic we have seen in the episode are effected through Ariosto's variations on this one significant term.⁴⁹

In the balance of this paper, I will attempt an analysis of tyranny as emerges from Ariosto's imitation and development of Niccolò da Correggio's text. The focus of this development is the logic by which the chastity of the wife succumbs to the temptations of money and impunity: precise components, we will see, of tyranny.

⁴⁵ For the humanist allegories of Hercules (especially Salutati and Landino) see Ascoli, 52-56. The medieval allegorical tradition (e.g. the third Vatican Mythographer) interpreted Hercules' exploit "historically" as the theft of livestock.

⁴⁶ Gundersheimer, 204, 255. That Hercules is, for Herodotus, the ancestor of Midas and Gyges, archetypal wealthy tyrants, may also infect Ariosto's use of the Herculean myth for the Estensi. There are a number of Lydian or Persian references (e.g. Cambyzes, Croesus, Monaeses) in the *Furioso* (Ascoli, 275, who points to possible links between Lidia [*Orlando furioso* 34.9-43] and the legendary wealth of the Persians).

⁴⁷ For the "Po cornuto," see Ceserani, 1984, 500-02, who associates it with the *bivio* (without mentioning Hercules) as a narrative device.

⁴⁸ For this figure in Ariosto's poem, especially in regard to the journey of Ruggiero on the hippogriff, see Ascoli, 1987: 52-57.

⁴⁹ The horned river itself confirms the Herculean reference, since one of Hercules' exploits was the defeat of the River Achelous, Hercules' rival for Dejanira's love, and the removal of its horn, which became, in an alternative explanation to the horn of Amalthea, a "phallic" horn of plenty (Hyginus, ch. 31).

The importance of the test of chastity in Ariosto's tales is underscored by its being compared to the temptations of Adam and Christ, and to the trial of Christ's Passion, alluded to by Rinaldo's refusal of the cup;⁵⁰ Rinaldo evades the melancholy "passion" of his host, who has eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge to his enduring remorse.⁵¹ The scriptural references confer both a comic exaggeration on the domestic subject of these tales while simultaneously insisting on its fundamental importance. Although Melissa mentions the testing-cup in the first tale when she suggests to the knight that he test his wife (cf. 43.30), there is no actual testing with a cup in the tales themselves: one clue to how thoroughly Ariosto has metamorphosed his materials. Despite this, the temptation of wives with money and other valuables, and most of all Argia's coin-minting dog (the sorceress Manto in disguise) restate the testing function of the cup, and retain its suggestion of the traditional cup of faith, the cornucopia, and the Grail.⁵²

In the tale of Cephalus and its substantial commentary, from Ovid through the mythographers, the test of the wife's chastity is the central and climactic event. Although in the *Cefalo* it occurs in the first act, it is highly elaborated and contains much of da Correggio's original contribution to the story. The tradition offers sharply distinct versions of the yielding of Procris: as the foregone collapse of always fragile female virtue (Hyginus, Bersuire, Boccaccio in the *De claris mulieribus*), or in the more nuanced accounts of Ovid and the *Cefalo*, the partial exoneration of Procris, and a shift of responsibility for the disaster to the self-destructive folly of Cephalus' tempting of his wife and to the effects on the spouses of his previous seduction by Aurora.⁵³

Ovid and da Correggio emphasize Procris' disdain when her husband's entrapment is unmasked; both gallantly reduce the wife's transgression to a minimal moment of hesitation, seized on by the jealous husband as proof of intended infidelity.⁵⁴ In the *Cefalo* even this hesitation is explained and in part excused: the tempted Procri describes herself as curiously ambivalent, drawn to the mysterious merchant but mindful of her pact of fidelity with Cefalo:

⁵⁰ *Orlando furioso* 43.7.2: "che'l tentar qualche volta Idio disdegna" (cf. Luke 4.14); 43.8.1, "... come Adam, poi che gustò del pomo" (cf. Gen. 2.17); and 43.7.5: "Or questo vin dinanzi mi sia tolto"; and Luke 22.42: "... transfer calicem istum a me."

⁵¹ On the refusal of the drink as wise or prudent, see Pool, 222, Ferroni 1975, Santoro, 1976: 112 and 1983, 142-151; Weaver, 395; Wiggins, 32-37; Casadei 1992: 89-96.

⁵² The *nappo* (also called *vaso* or *vasello*) is of fine gold studded with gems (cf. 42.98), anticipating some of the corrupting gifts offered by the seducers in the tales. On this cup as the cup of faith, and of the legendary iconography of John the Evangelist, see Ascoli, 327, 337. For the Holy Grail as a herald of fiduciary instruments, the new "money of account" or credit (a "blank check") see Shell, 1990, 44-46; Rajna, 576, invokes the vessels of water turned to wine at Cana.

⁵³ Ovid, *Met.* 7.714-721; 738-39 ("in mea pugno / vulnera . . ."); Anderson, 313-14 points out in his notes Ovid's alterations of Liberalis and Apollodorus, all with the effect of making the tale more genteel and minimizing Procris' guilt. Lavin, 269-70, makes this point of the *Cefalo*.

⁵⁴ Ovid, *Met.*, 7.740: "Muneraque augendo tamen dubitare coegi. . ."

Qual che tu sèi, che cum larga mano
 cum la persona tua l'oro prometti,
 perché te mostri, nelo aspetto, umano,
 voria por fine a toi amorosi effetti.
 Ma condurmi a tale opra è un caso strano,
 benché Amor me abbia già tra soi subietti
 e tutta già per te mi sento presa,
 ma far contra il mio Cefal pur mi pesa.
 (1.169-176)

Some reasons for her ambivalence may be noted in the text: Procri's husband is not metamorphosed (as he is in Ovid and Ariosto) but only masquerading, and his offers are calibrated to play upon Procri's vulnerable points. Alerting the reader both to the classicizing ambitions and native Ferrarese origins of the *Fabula*, the gifts offered combine allusion to pagan deities with the magic paraphernalia of vernacular Romance: among other gifts, Cefalo offers the ring of Juno, which discloses a husband's infidelities, and a second ring that enforces fidelity: these play to Procri's own suspicions of her husband, who had been previously abducted by a goddess.⁵⁵ From the other side, the disguised Cefalo slyly presents gifts that allude to the amours of the Olympians as justification for the adultery he proposes. After these precedents, which temper the case against Procri, da Correggio has his Cefalo subsequently attribute Procri's fatal hesitation to her penetration of the disguise — she was, Cefalo allows, seduced because she was actually responding to her lawful husband.⁵⁶ The psychology of both spouses is plausible and ingenious, and shows da Correggio's effort, in composing a marriage-pageant, to offer a version of Procri more tolerant even than Ovid's.

In both of the tales for Rinaldo, Ariosto takes over the psychological complexity and play of economic and erotic motives in the testing scene of the *Cefalo*, but, in what is perhaps his most radical modification of da Correggio's treatment, makes the wife unambiguously guilty, thus returning to the misogynistic versions.⁵⁷ Still, Ariosto's departure from the courtly gallantry that animates the Cefalo is not primarily a misogynistic gesture. For two reasons: first, Ariosto's account undertakes an investigation of the intertwining of economic and erotic motives in the love-request that is utterly serious (and in which Ariosto's persona is, as we saw, intimately involved); second, Ariosto's

⁵⁵ 1.121-22: "un bel sacrato anello / che a riguardarvi ogni cosa si vede . . ." and 126-27: "questo altro ha forza a far servir la fede. . . ."

⁵⁶ 1.191-92: "e son ben certo / che tu mi cognoscisti ancor coperto. . . ." Pleading with the offended Procri to return to him, Cefalo completely reverses the outcome of the testing scene (2.53-54): "Non salvasti il nostro onore / quando scortesemente io te tentai?"

⁵⁷ Rajna, 581-82, notes Ariosto's use of Hyginus, from which the expedient of the homosexual offer to the husband is derived.

account of testing the wife is framed by the historical fall of man and the universal fallibility of the human will. Since no virtue, given enough pressure, is unassailable, there is an implicit obligation to display reciprocal forgiveness and tolerance.

What exactly "enough pressure" means, however, is the focus of the tales and the key to the testing scenes. Though his outcomes differ, Ariosto draws three principal elements from the seduction scene in the *Cefalo*: first, the seducer is wealthy and liberal, thus able to offer gifts of enormous value for something — the impalpable virtue of chastity — that, as the seducers reiterate, costs nothing to give up (cf. 43.112,8, 138,8). In economic terms the seducer's *largesse* is boundless. Second, the seducer is sexually attractive — in the play as the famously handsome (albeit disguised) *Cefalo* or, in the case of Ariosto's tales, as a long-standing lover of established appeal. Third and decisive, the seducer adds to his lavish gifts and beauty two interrelated critical elements: coined money, and the promise of impunity through secrecy. Thus in the *Cefalo* the gifts alone, although they include such precious items as the ointment that reversed the sex of Tiresias (father of Ariosto's *Manto*), do not suffice to move *Procri*; but when the disguised *Cefalo* offers his wife one hundred gold pieces, and a forest *tugurio* where he and *Procri* may disport themselves undiscovered, she hesitates.⁵⁸ The power to compel arises from the combination of money and impunity: that is, the two ingredients that facilitate a tyranny. In Ariosto's tales, a similar logic emerges: in the first tale, the wife, though moved by rubies and the erotic appeal of the Ferrarese knight who had long been her admirer, does not consent until given a guarantee of secrecy.⁵⁹ In the second story, despite *Argia*'s access to her husband's purse, the little dog overwhelms her scruples because it produces the full range of kinds of wealth, from coins to gems and gowns; which is to say that it represents the traditional understanding of money as the measure and equivalent of all wealth. The little dog not only functions as a mint, coining money as readily as it defecates: it is a metaphor of money as exchange-value itself.⁶⁰ Indeed, on both occasions that the dog performs, it begins by making money.⁶¹

As I anticipated, the prolific little dog also picks up the more recondite implications of the testing cup: echoing the horns borne by the chaste ladies in the previous canto, it is a form of the classical cornucopia, and of the mysterious

⁵⁸ See 1.148-150, "te anzio ultra quel quei don cento onze d'oro. / Qui fora de la terra è un mio tugurio / dove alcun non va mai. . . ."; *tugurio* also appears in the *Orlando furioso*, 43.132.8 to describe the temple of Chastity in relation to *Manto*'s magic castle.

⁵⁹ Cf. 43.38,7-8: "che mi compiacieria, quando credesse / ch'altra persona mai nol risapesse."

⁶⁰ See Shell, 1978, 49-62 on gold as the "homogenous" value that is like metaphor in being both a thing and "in exchange for all things." Shell makes a similar analysis of the Grail as both hetero- and homogeneous with "all things" in 1982, 40-41, 44. *Rajna* recalls *Basile's asino cacaure* in the first tale of the *Cunto de li cunti*.

⁶¹ Cf. 43.110.3, "una marca d'oro"; and 43.114.2: "Facea nascer le doble a diece a diece. . . ."

feeding vessel or Grail of Christian romance: the source of infinite abundance.⁶² As the origin of wealth, the dog is by definition beyond price, and can therefore not be bought with any sum of money; only the grant of a *mercede* that, because it represents the lady's virtue, is itself beyond price, can match it in value.⁶³ Yet, despite the dog's power, a private audience with the persuasive dog-trainer is necessary to bend Argia's resolution (43.113.8), and the final element in the lady's self-persuasion to abandon her resistance is her hope that her transgression will remain secret.⁶⁴

Why then — beyond the needs of psychological plausibility — the correlation of money-as-universal measure and secrecy? If the power of money to be exchanged secretly represents the power of tyranny, the vulnerability to corruption by such power illustrates the fragility of personal probity. This is a form of the famous thesis expounded by Glaucon in his attack on the virtue of justice in Plato's *Republic*. If a putatively just man, Glaucon argues, possessed a ring of invisibility like that of Gyges the Lydian, he would (as Gyges did) act unjustly, stealing and committing adultery at will.⁶⁵ Put in Plato's terms, what corrupts da Correggio's Procri and the wives in Ariosto's *novelle* is the power to commit an injustice with impunity. The ring of Gyges the Lydian to which Glaucon refers is patently the forerunner of the rings in the *Cefalo* that disclose adultery and enforce chastity; it is also a likely archetype for the ring of Angelica, which both confers invisibility and discloses the invisible, and which figures so prominently as a narrative device in the two *Orlando* epics.⁶⁶

Thus the forces levied against chastity in Ariosto's tales are by definition irresistible: not only is mistrusting and tempting the spouse ill-advised and perverse in light of the trust that ought to obtain in marriage (at least in Ariosto's terms in the fifth satire), it also emblemizes the fragility of economic and human relations based on fair distribution of scarce goods when overmatched with limitless "money" and the temptation of complete impunity.

⁶² For the cornucopia and the Grail, see Shell, 1982, 41-44; the cornucopia was often found on ancient coins. As Beatrice Reynolds saw (Ariosto 1975: 734-735), the dog's production of coins, done by rising on its hind legs and shaking its body, suggests an abundant sexual power. In this sense the dog tropes the "shower of gold" by which Jove impregnated Danaë, another submerged myth here; see below.

⁶³ These are the terms of Adonio's negotiation with Argia's maid, 43.109-112 (note 111.6: "per oro no, ch'oro pagar nol puote.") Ariosto frequently uses the notion of a "price" for the lady's favor (cf. 43.89, 110, 112).

⁶⁴ See 43.115.5-6: "... lo sperar ch'alcun mai non lo rapporti, / fero ai casti pensier tal violenza, / ch'ella accettò il bel cane, e per mercede / in braccio e in preda al suo amator si diede."

⁶⁵ Plato, *Republic* (359a-360a)

⁶⁶ For Angelica's ring, see Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato* II. 5.30-48; *Orlando furioso* 8.2.1- 4. The Platonic origin (Herodotus' version of the ring of Gyges is discussed below) of Angelica's ring has been largely overlooked, though Rajna (140) noted the link of the ring to the tradition of the heliotrope as the stone of invisibility (Calandrino's theft-facilitating *elitropia* in *Decameron* 3.9; cf. Ascoli, 188); a note on the ring by Finucci (275) mentions Gyges.

By troping as a real economic exchange the action of courtly reciprocity, of the *mercede* that the lady owes to the knight who praises and serves her, the seducer constructs a plausible, though sophistical exchange-rate that correlates the unlimited wealth of the seducer and the lady's equally "priceless" favors. With these premises, which illustrate the dangers of superimposing an order of gifts and "grace" with an economy of money and prices, a sale inevitably results. The wives are not the sole victims of the trap, however.

Although da Correggio elaborates a courteous exoneration of Procri's infidelity, the rest of the drama, after the lovers and spouses are reconciled, might seem dominated by Procri's jealousy of her husband, its causes, consequences, and cure: we saw this outcome prepared by her suspicions of Cefalo, which make her more vulnerable to seduction. Benvenuti and Sacchi claim that the discouragement of the wife's jealousy remains (as it is in the 1475 Bologna *Cefalo*) the chief "message" of the play in its function as an epithalamium.⁶⁷ But di Benedetto, echoed by Pyle, observes that the action is also explicitly directed at the infidelity of Cefalo.⁶⁸ The jealousies and infidelities of Cefalo and Procri mirror one another, and the epithalamic therapy of the play is directed at the banishment of jealousy and infidelity from both husband and wife.

From this more balanced point of view, Procri's jealousy, by being strongly motivated, is partially excused by Cefalo's own lingering memories of his infidelity with Aurora: I refer of course to Cefalo's continuing fantasy, as he takes his ease during his daily hunt, of embracing the "aura," or breeze — a fantasy so vivid and detailed that Procri's eventual misconstruction of it is virtually inevitable. The topic of Procri's jealousy and Cefalo's possible infidelity is introduced explicitly in act four by the *fante*, who attests to Cefalo's apparent chastity (she has herself made him "milli inviti") but notes that women have been secretly betrayed many times before ("Quante sono le donne a chi i mariti / rompen la fede, e pur nulla si sente"), a remark that returns in Ariosto's poem as Rinaldo's tolerant worldly-wisdom upon hearing the tale of the woeful knight.⁶⁹ As the *fante* continues her soliloquy, she provides the background for Cefalo's infidelity by evoking again, now from the husband's side, the Olympian amours previously invoked to help seduce Procri, and recalls to the reader how male sexual excursions are routinely authorized in comedy and love-elegy by reference to Jove's erotic exploits.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Cefalo* 1.23-24 ("E di quanto dolor, quanto tormento, / ogni dì fia cagion la gelusia"), spoken in the *argomento*; also 4.97; 181; 211; and 5.3-4.

⁶⁸ See Diana's words at 5.77-78: "Tu, Procris, non serai mai più gelosa / né Cefal fia mai d'altra innamorato."

⁶⁹ Cf. 43.48-49: "Quanti uomini odi tu, che già per oro / han traditi padroni e amici loro? . . . Se te altrettanto avesse ella tentato, / non so se tu più saldo fossi stato." For Schiesari, the thrust of the episode is the domestication of woman; but the domestication of Rinaldo — the epic hero — and of Anselmo seem closer to the focus of Ariosto's episode.

⁷⁰ Augustine's denunciation of the scene in Terence's *Eunuchus*, where a painting of Jupiter

If the superficial irony of the story of Cephalus (in all its forms) is that Procri has nothing but the breeze to be jealous of (4.181), the more profound irony is that her jealousy is well-founded indeed, since Cefalo's "imaginary" lover (*aura*, the "breeze") to which he daily repairs punningly recalls the goddess who once seduced him (Aurora). It just as surely indicates (and here da Correggio's prebembesque Petrarchism is most suggestive) that Cefalo's pursuit of his *idée fixe* is structured like Petrarch's idolatrous cultivation of Laura's memory,⁷¹ with the phonic image (the word *aura*, echoing Aurora) evoking his original *raptus* by the goddess, as Petrarch repeatedly evokes his original sight of Laura (*Canzoniere*, sonnet 90). Cefalo's reiteration of the *aura* / Aurora homonymy is itself Petrarchan, and follows Petrarch's manipulation of Laura's name as a memorial reflex built into the verbal tissue of the *Canzoniere*.⁷² To clinch the nexus of associations with the seduction scenes of the *Cefalo*, Cefalo's imaginary goddess *aura* is (as in Petrarch) also a punning homonym for gold (Lat. *auro*, It. *oro*).⁷³ If the money that seduces Procri bears the stamp of secret tyranny, the aureate memories that seduce Cefalo are also a kind of "invisible" wealth hoarded and tasted in secret because locked in the privacy of memory, like Petrarch's solitary meditation on Laura's image.⁷⁴ As the destructive jealousy and verbal infidelity of Cefalo derive from this original encounter with Aurora, his idolatrous cultivation of the name of Aura — da Correggio suggests — is the most dangerous of all threats to the marriage of true minds Cefalo and Procri had pledged to one another.⁷⁵

The soliloquy of the Circassian servant thus links Cefalo's psychic

descending to Danae as a shower of gold abets the lover's intentions, springs to mind here (*City of God* 2.7). For the Petrarchan version of this topos and its diffusion among Renaissance poets, see Barkan, 206-21.

⁷¹ *Canzone* 127, "Chiare, fresche e dolci acque" echoed, along with madrigal 52, at *Cefalo* 3.35-38; for the idolatry of Laura's image, see Durling, 1965: 68-72 and 1976: 18-26.

⁷² Petrarch's poem 5, distributing the syllables of *Laureta* throughout the poem, refers to the image of her name written on his heart (v. 2: "che nel cor mi scrisse Amore") as the source and focus of the phonetic dispersion (Durling, 1971 and 1976: 11-14). For modulations on *Laura*, *aura*, *auro* (and *lauro*) as the basis of whole compositions, note especially sonnets 194-198, all but one of which begin with *aura* and modulate to related terms (e.g. *aura*, *aureo*, etc.); see also 246. Poem 239, a sestina, begins by identifying *Aurora* with *aura*, as in the *Cefalo*: "Là ver l'aurora, che sì dolce l'aura . . ." (also 223). See Contini, 193-200.

⁷³ Ovid has such a series of variations (twelve instances in all, most in final position in the line) on *Aurora*, *aura*, *aures*, *aurem*, *oro* (from *oro*, -as, *orare*), *ore* (from *os*, *oris*) and indeed *aurea* (of the golden tip of Cephalus' spear, *Met.* 7. 673); for borrowings of this device in the *Cefalo*, see Arata, 173-74.

⁷⁴ *Canzoniere* 35,1: "solo e pensoso i più deserti campi. . ." In poems 227 and 269 the homonymy of *aura*, *auro*, and *oro* is thematized by describing Laura as the poet's golden hoard, his *tesoro*.

⁷⁵ Anderson, 315, commenting on Ovid's tale, notes that Cephalus and Procris, though husband and wife, are also like the pledged erotic lovers of love-elegy — this explicit pledge of sexual *fides* makes their marriage more than a mere legal bond; one reason their union attracts the envy of the Gods.

infidelity with the topic of the power of gold to corrupt: the theme of the wife's seduction with gifts here finds its perfect objective correlative in the reference of the *fante* to the myth of Danaë, to whom Jove arrived (4.27-28: "mutato / in pioggia d'oro") in a shower of gold, a myth interpreted since antiquity (Horace, *Odes* 3.16) and the Middle Ages (Bersuire) as recording a tale of seduction by money:⁷⁶ but these exempla are themselves drawn from Petrarch's poetic hoard, both here and in their earlier use to seduce Procri.⁷⁷ The images that surround and seduce Procri are thus marked as a specifically Petrarchan currency. Let me give one further example.

Amid the routine Petrarchan borrowings of the *Cefalo* is a clear emphasis on the famous *adynata* or *impossibilia* that identify the speaker's hopeless desire in the *Canzoniere*, in sonnet 212 and sestina 239, formulas several times evoked in the *Cefalo*.⁷⁸ What is more important, the formula has narrative import, since the desire to "embrace the breeze" is the precise form of Cefalo's marital infidelity.⁷⁹ Most strikingly, the whole nexus on embracing the *aura* is closely linked to the proverbial phrase by which Cefalo identifies his own perverse desire to test his wife: "Perché cerchi nel giunco il nodo," also a kind of *adynaton*.⁸⁰ This nexus is especially significant as it immediately precedes a verse of the *Cefalo* (1.195: "trovato ho quel ch'io non voleva trovare") that Ariosto four times reiterates as the *sententia* for his episode.⁸¹ Not only is Ariosto's intertextual weave with the Petrarchan stratum of the *Cefalo* one of subtlety and nuance, but the nodal point of that intertext is precisely the formulaic reproach of the male desire to test the wife.

It follows that Ariosto's two tales, like da Correggio's *Cefalo*, are as much about jealousy — as a diseased state of the mind and imagination — and its root in an original male infidelity, as about wifely chastity. We can even say that the question of the wife's chastity is subordinate to the problem of jealousy, for it is

⁷⁶ For Danaë in the mythographical tradition and in Petrarch, Titian and Correggio, see Barkan, 106, 116-17, 189-98, 191-92, and 310-11.

⁷⁷ 1.145-146: "Iove non son, non son Febo o Mercurio, / ch'io mi sappia far cigno o farni un toro!"; note the adaptation of the *congedo* to Petrarch, *Canzoniere* 23 (161-63).

⁷⁸ *Canzoniere* 212: "et una cerva errante e fugitiva / caccio con un bue zoppo" (7-8); and sestina 239, 37: "In rete accolgo l'aura, e'n ghiaccio i fiori." Compare *Cefalo*: at 4.44 ("chi caccia con le rete i pesci in foce . . ."), of Cefalo's hunting; at 2.185 ("chi troppo abbraccia spesso stringe il vento"). These all derive from the *senhal* of the troubadour Arnaut Daniel (Petrarch 1972, 273).

⁷⁹ See 3. 97-104, beginning with "aura suave" (cf. *Canz.* 197.1); and 4. 53-56, "Aura mia vene"; thus Procri suffers from "gelusia del vento" (4.181).

⁸⁰ The phrase echoes the Plautine "tu cerchi di trovar nel gionco un nodo," in the *Menechini* (2.35), the *volgare* version of Plautus' *Menaechmi* (for the text, see Benvenuti and Sacchi, 88-167), the play produced the year before on the same stage as the *Cefalo* (perhaps an *hommage* here).

⁸¹ *Orlando furioso* 42.104, "cercar suaso / quel che poi ritrovar non vorria forse"; and 43.6, 43.47, and 43.66 (there is perhaps influence of Ecclus. 3.23-24). The whole passage in which Rinaldo chides his host for tempting his wife with gold (43.48.7-8) is one of Ariosto's closest borrowings from the *Cefalo* (cf. 1.193-200; not noted by Rajna).

explicit that both wives have resisted previous offers from lovers (cf. 43.34, the Ferrarese lover, 43.75, Adonio); they have, in fact, been "tested" once and found faithful (like their exemplars, they had "chiuso le sbarre").⁸²

The causal effect of male jealousy in precipitating the infidelity of wives is subtly brought out by Ariosto's two tales: and this causation, too, has its origins in the special power of the tyrant and its economic roots. In rejecting the advances of Melissa, the "wealthy and powerful" Mantuan lady, Rinaldo's host claims to have confidence in his wife, but what he in fact says is that his belief in his wife's fidelity is the basis of his own:

ch'a dietro ne traeva tutte mie voglie
il conoscermi fida la mia moglie.
La speme, la credenza, la certezza
che de la fede di mia moglie avea . . .
(43.22.7-8 - 43.23.1-2)

His faith in his wife has become a possession. The knight trips into the traditional etymology of *avaro* from *habeo*, suggesting that he is a hoarder of his wife's fidelity: thus it makes sense that in this list of virtues, the place of charity is taken by certainty, which is strictly speaking incompatible with faith. Reflecting that the wife herself had been removed from *commercio umano* and hoarded by her father out of fear that she would turn out like her mother, the woeful knight, who had come into his fortune through his wife in the first place, has turned his wife into his hoard: his spying on and temptation of her, disguised as her own lover, is the action of a tyrant.

In this respect Ariosto's second tale emerges as a version of Herodotus' tale of Gyges the Lydian, analyzed by Shell as the aetiology of a tyranny (Shell, 1978: 14-21). In Herodotus' story, Gyges, a shield bearer, is constrained by his lord King Candaules to spy upon his wife's beauty; she discovers the sacrilege, and, horrified by her husband's violation of both her chastity and of Lydian sexual norms, she summons Gyges and gives him the choice of killing Candaules and marrying her or being killed himself. Thus Candaules' wilful desecration of his own wife's modesty cuckolds and destroys him, as Cefalo's attempted seduction of his wife ruins his marriage.⁸³

In Shell's account of tyranny (which reiterates that of Plato and Herodotus) the tyrant dominates the citizenry because he is invisible: he can see others while

⁸² Ariosto here brings into relief an element found in the *Lai du cor* (Rajna, 577): the test of the cup reveals not only the unchaste fantasies (not necessarily unchaste acts) of wives; it also spills if the husband suffers from jealousy, that is, from the fantasy of the wife's unchastity.

⁸³ Herodotus, 1.6-14. The Greek text of Herodotus was published by Aldus in 1502, but Lorenzo Valla's Latin translation had been available since 1474; it was the basis for Boiardo's *volgarizzamento* done for Ercole I d'Este before 1491, although not published until 1533 (Venice; Reichenbach, 192-197).

remaining unseen, a power like that of the ring of Gyges, which makes it possible to commit injustices and go unpunished. In Ariosto's tales, the disguise that Melissa provides for the woeful knight works like the ring of Gyges, making the husband invisible as he spies on his wife, as he inspects his treasure, his hoard, and tests its moral mettle, its "alloy." In the more complex second story, where it is not the husband who attempts the wife's chastity, Anselmo still contributes to Argia's infidelity by discovering, through astrological prediction, her inevitable fall, a discovery which leads him to a lack of confidence in her which she notices and resents ("non avea in sua fede fede," she reproaches him). Finally, Anselmo endows his wife with all his wealth, thus attempting to buy his wife's loyalty before a rival can, a gesture that establishes her value as merchandise, and thus one that puts her on the market.⁸⁴ Anselmo's use of divination also suggests how jealousy and suspicion derive from the desire to see and control the activity of the spouse, even (as in the case of the *Lai du Cor*) to know the spouse's private thoughts. Such a power to know the intimate life of another while remaining invisible oneself is also like the power of the ring of Gyges to make the bearer invisible, the power of establishing and maintaining a tyranny — a power that, in Shell's analysis, derives from, and is coincident with, the nature of money as "invisible" wealth.

As we noted at the outset, Niccolò da Correggio, lord of Correggio and other holdings in his own right, but also by turns courtier to the Estensi, to the Gonzaga, and to Ludovico il Moro, restores the virginal purity of marriage, after Cefalo has killed Procri, by resurrecting the bride and beginning all over again. As Lavin argued, such a conclusion echoes the generic model of da Correggio's play, the *sacra rappresentazione*, where the limitless abundance of divine grace compensates even for martyrdom.⁸⁵ For da Correggio, given the sufficient power of Diana, that is, the sufficient power of the Dukes of Este or the aristocracy in general, the marital errors of unchastity and jealousy can be erased: the contamination of the wife by money, her reduction to merchandise can be reversed. For where the divine is present — so the argument goes — the free gift is possible, and an order of *grazia* can be distinguished from one of merchandise.

Ariosto, despite, or perhaps because of, his lavish but sometimes ironic praise of the Estensi, seems not to share the same confidence in the benign intentions of disproportionate wealth and power. In Ariosto's second tale, the marriage of Anselmo and Argia can be reestablished only if the fallibility of both partners is *made visible* and mutually forgiven: transparency, no matter how

⁸⁴ *Orlando furioso* 43.91.4-8, where the reckoning of domestic accounts and of chastity are conflated: "altro conto saper non ne vo' poi, / pur che, qual ti lascio or, tu mi ti renda: / pur che, come or tu sei, mi sie rimasa, / fa che io non trovi né poder né casa."

⁸⁵ Lavin, 269-71. It is thus appropriate that the prologue, announcing the final resolution by a deity, echoes Petrarch's "tarde non fur mai grazie divine," from *Triumphus eternitatis*, 13.

humiliating, is essential. Only the *perdoni* granted by the spouses to each other can cancel the powerful *doni* that have corrupted them.⁸⁶ But Ariosto's solution is not a return to a golden age before betrayal, before money, before contracts and writing.⁸⁷ His tale does not even imply the reinstitution of an archaic exchange like that symbolized by the exempla of chastity, an order that in historical terms might be thought of as returning to the "tempi del Duca Borso," when Ferrara lived within its means.⁸⁸ Rather, the final arrangement between husband and wife requires the gamut of monetary and fiduciary instruments and pushes to the maximum the conflation of economic and psychological categories: it is first expressed in the economic terms of a fair transaction in which giving and receiving are equal (43.142.7: "di par l'avere e 'l dar, marito, poni"). Although the language here is economic and legal, suggesting that explicit, verifiable contracts couched in the terms of Roman law (of which Anselmo, the judge, should be an expert) are preferable to the elite feudal system of benefits that governs Niccolò da Correggio's easy *largesse* with his audience, the notion of equity is not as simple and straightforward as it might seem.

The principle of matching equal advantage with equal outlay or risk is not quite adequate to explain the conclusion of the tale of Argia and Anselmo,⁸⁹ given that the moral balances of the two spouses are, at story's end, far from equal: Anselmo's transgressions include both the intent to have her murdered and his more reprehensible failure of chastity, compounded with hypocrisy.⁹⁰ But Argia's proposal includes waiving the right of justice due to her, and her sacrifice of retribution becomes itself the moral capital for reinstituting the marriage. The wife allows Anselmo to cancel his moral debt, expressing her forbearance in terms of a hypothesis that substantially re-supposes the truth: "poni che siamo pari."⁹¹ In economic terms, the difference between Anselmo's real debt and the

⁸⁶ The text of the Cefalo correlates *doni* with *perdoni* at 1.162-164 (the gifts tempt Procri; she hopes Cefalo will forgive her) and 3.41-43 (Cefalo accepts the "celesti doni" of Diana from Procri, and hopes his wife will forgive him); also 2.128-130. Ariosto correlates *perdono* with Argia's cancelling of Anselmo's debt of guilt, 43: 142.7-8 (*poni, perdoni*).

⁸⁷ Chiampi, 343, oversimplifies in having Ariosto identify the fall into corruption with the institution of writing. Note the chrysographic writing of the mottoes in the temple of Chastity, 42.88.1; for chrysography as staging the problematic intersection of spiritual and material value see Shell, 1982, 191-193.

⁸⁸ Compare Shell's analysis of how Plato attempted to meet the challenge of the money economy and its tyranny (1978: 40-48).

⁸⁹ Argia echoes the principles of Bradamante's judgment in favor of Ullania in the Rocca di Tristano, cf. 32.106.1-2: "se guadagni e perdite non sono / in tutto pari, ingiusto è ogni partito." On the rarity of parity in love, exemplified by Rinaldo and Angelica, see *Orlando furioso* 2.1-2, and Ascoli's discussion (319-20).

⁹⁰ Anselmo's hypocrisy is recorded with a figure from the Gospels, of the "straw" or *festuca* — the minor fault — the hypocrite sees in others, without seeing the "beam" (*trave, trabs*) in his own; cf. 43.128.3 and Matth. 7.3.

⁹¹ *Ponere* in this sense echoes, and compensates for, 43.27.5, where *pogniamo* refers to the doleful knight's supposition that Melissa's challenge of his wife's infidelity might be countenanced.

equality supposed by his wife — the gift of her grace — functions as the collateral, the hypothec that secures the reconciliation of the spouses.⁹² Thus the harmony and peace of the couple is purchased only thanks to Argia's lavish *perdono*, and only with the help of the imaginary "money of account" that is credit — in other words, faith as a pact or bond between the spouses, secured not by the gods, but by the signatories.

Thus it is Argia, far more sinned against than sinning, who bears the burden of restoring marital harmony through a forbearance that overpays the debt incurred by past tyranny. Only the wife's free gift can undo the transaction that equated an infinite fount of wealth with the value of a wife's chastity. In an economy unbalanced by tyranny, a dose of grace is necessary if moral accounts are to come up even. Ariosto's language suggests that Argia enacts a version of the Christian atonement, in which only the innocent lamb of God can pay the price for the fault of Adam's disobedience: but the economy of atonement in the Christian mystery (which underlies the *sacra rappresentazione* and the aristocratic economy of the *Cefalo*) is not reiterated here, but rather transposed to the private, domestic sphere, at once deflating it and furnishing a new basis for its value.

That the solution for Argia and Anselmo, despite its economic and psychological clarity, remains to some extent utopian is hinted at by its proven failure as a moral example. Indeed, all the exemplary admonitions fail, including the temple of Chastity itself: the boatman points out that his master, the woeful knight, had forgotten the old story of Argia and Anselmo (43.70.3: "quando bisognò, l'ebbe in oblio"), just as his wife had finally disregarded the examples sculpted in the fountain of chastity. Will the tales help complete Rinaldo's recovery from the tyranny of jealousy? As Zatti suggests, Rinaldo's refusal of the *paragone*, of the test, marks a departure from the chivalric code of deciding valor by rushing to the judgment of the contest; his adoption of the calculating language of the wager (43.66.6: "metter saria uno mille contra uno a gioco") — a decidedly diminished form of trial — for deciding whether to accept the test (or, in retrospect, whether he should have or not) might suggest that Rinaldo, like Argia and Anselmo, has adopted an enlightened prudence with respect to the question of married chastity, and now thinks soberly in terms of an economy of rational risks and benefits. But it is not at all clear that Rinaldo's refusal of the cup is ultimately preferable to the follies of Adonio and the doleful knight. Indeed, Rinaldo's refusal of the cup looks more and more like a failure to acknowledge the extent of human fallibility: not so much that of Clarice, as his own.⁹³ Ariosto seems to offer two unattractive options: either Rinaldo's aloof, convenient *prudenza* or the madness of possessive jealousy.

⁹² On this concept of the hypothec, and its relation to a logical hypothesis, see Shell, 1979, 44-48.

⁹³ The "lieve incarco delle coma" (42.100) that Rinaldo refuses to risk obtaining echoes the *iugum suave* Christ offers his followers; note the verbal link to the *giugal nodo* (42.71) of marriage.

If there is a third option in the episode as a whole, it is suggested by the role of Manto. Manto's reciprocity seems part of a larger system than courtly duty and reward: although she aids and abets adultery, she does so not out of injured vanity and spite, like Melissa, but out of a tenacious sense of gratitude. Her assistance finally works in favor of the marriage-bond, while modifying its strictly patriarchal structure. Manto's shape-changing — she is by turns a serpent, a little lap-dog and (probably) an Ethiop as ugly as Aesop — might itself be seen as a figure for Ariosto's transformation of his sources and their implicit "economies."⁹⁴ This shape-changing links Manto on the one hand to the sophistical function of money as the architectonic measure of all things, into which all values can be converted;⁹⁵ and on the other hand to the narrator himself, as Schiesari suggests, insofar as he participates in the folly of his characters — and perhaps never more than here, where the poet's anxieties about Alessandra Benucci are covertly staged. Such a figure of the poet as Manto (Virgil's ancestor, after all) would work well with yet another "architectonic" measure traditionally closely identified with money: poetic language, or, in short, metaphor.⁹⁶ In this view, the poet's role is to adapt his persona and his poem to all things, to become a universal measure: this includes (as in Pico's fable) descending as well as ascending along the scale of creatures, slithering like a snake (along with Manto) as well as flying with the hippogriff.

If Manto is indeed (and the indeterminacy is important) the Aesop-like Ethiopian, she would incorporate three exoteric sources of "wisdom," probably to be understood as paradoxical from the perspective of Christian chivalric romance: the traditional Moslem enemy; the immortal *fate*, normally hostile to the official "court" culture;⁹⁷ and Aesop, the slave from Asia Minor who achieved renown for his shrewd animal fables. A number of features of the Renaissance Aesop suggest that Ariosto's mention of him here is more than merely ornamental.⁹⁸ According to Aulus Gellius (2.2.29) and the medieval lives, Aesop was a Phrygian; he takes up the cause of the Samians against

⁹⁴ Procri's fateful gifts of the hunting dog (Laelaps) and the unswerving javelin become, in Ariosto's tales, a little lap-dog that coins money and the cold shaft of jealousy, a trope rather than a real spear; cf. 43.39.1, 118.2-3.

⁹⁵ Shell, 1978, 37, discusses the Sophists, who by maintaining that wisdom could be bought, made money the measure of all things.

⁹⁶ For "formal similarities between metaphorization (which characterizes all language and literature) and economic representation and exchange," see Shell, 1979, 1-10 and 55-57.

⁹⁷ Morgana le Fay, Arthur's sister, is mentioned at 43.28.3-4 as the author of the test of the horn, designed to disgrace Guinevere.

⁹⁸ Rinuccio d'Arezzo's Latin translation of Planudes' *Life of Aesop*, including a selection of tales, was widely available through the Milanese edition of Bono Accorsi (thus after 1480; Aesopus 1873 contains the text of Rinuccio's translation). One-hundred fifty editions of Aesop were published in Europe between about 1460 and 1500; Aldo Manuzio's Greek edition was published (with Latin translation) in 1505. Lenaghan, 1967, 1-18, describes the composition of medieval and early Renaissance collections.

Lydian Croesus' tyrannical demands for tribute, and is successful. Moreover, as Rajna intuited, the gratitude of the serpent-Manto to Adonio in the second of the tales has an Aesopic aspect and resembles several fables attributed to Aesop concerning ingratitude and betrayal between man and serpent.⁹⁹ Since the Ethiop's ugliness is in fact Manto's disguise, perhaps Ariosto's view of Aesop was like that of Planudes,¹⁰⁰ for whom the Phrygian's deformities were a disguise for the wisdom beneath, as if Aesop were a servile and homespun version of the Renaissance Platonic commonplace of Socrates as a Silenus, his external deformity concealing wisdom within.¹⁰¹ Precisely because of his unsavory features, the figure of Aesop, a slave who outsmarts a tyrant and secures his freedom through his own narrative skill, may be a self-deprecating expression of Ariosto's persona and his own economic struggles with his patrons, and a logical counterpart to the self-incriminating jealous lover of Alessandra Benucci memorialized in the temple of Chastity.¹⁰² The identification of Ariosto's persona with Manto, a sorceress, and with Aesop, a deformed and sagacious slave, are leaps of the authorial imagination that would have been inconceivable for Niccolò da Correggio.

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⁹⁹ See Aesopus 1873 (Steinhöwel, which follows the medieval "Romulus" for the first four books): 1.10; 2.10; 5.4, 5.8. Several of these include *sententiae* similar to Ariosto's *pro bono malum*: "pro melle venenum, / pro fructu penam, pro pietate dolum" (1.10, in Phaedrus' rhyming version); "Frequenter reddunt homines mala pro bonis . . ." (5.4).

¹⁰⁰ Ariosto undoubtedly knew his Aesop: e.g. *Satire* 1.246-61 (also Horace, *Epist.* 1.7.29-33) and 4.205-06, invoking the fable of the cock who finds a jewel in the dungheap. This was placed first in most medieval and early Renaissance collections of Aesop as a meta-fable about interpreting fables, which, as Horace recalls in his *Satires* (1.1.69-70) are always about the reader — or the teller.

¹⁰¹ This is relevant to Rinaldo's suspicion of the testing horn, jewel-studded and golden (43.98.7-8), but containing the poison of suspicion: it was said of Aesop that "turpia vasa quandoque continent balsamum" (Aesopus, 1873, 33). For Socrates as Silenus, see Plato, *Symposium* 215a-216e; and Erasmus, *Sileni Alcibiades* (first published 1515), in Phillips, 269-296; Socrates was himself a translator of Aesop (Phaedo 60b-61c). On the figure of Silenus (used of Orlando himself, 39-60) and the ambiguities of Ariosto's *serio ludere*, see Ascoli, 342-50.

¹⁰² On Aesop as the figurehead for an "Aesopic" writing of political resistance, see Patterson 1991, esp. 13-43.

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The Epic Chronotope from Ariosto to Spenser

During the very period when Ariosto was writing and revising *Orlando furioso*, the papacy was laboring mightily to recover Rome's status as *umbilicus mundi*. The most successful result of this effort remains visible today. The ambitions of Paul III combined with Michelangelo's architectural genius to produce the renewed Capitol. Above the convex oval pavement evoking the cosmos and Achilles' shield stands an equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius designed to assert papal *imperium*. Charles Stinger summarizes the intended symbolism:

The succession Alexander-Antonine emperor-Jupiter would have symbolized the transmission of world hegemony from the empires of Greece and Rome to the *imperium* of the Roman Church governed by the Farnese Pope. . . . The ancient Romans figuratively moved the *umbilicus mundi* from Delphi to the Roman Forum, and medieval legend transferred this to the Capitol. Thus the Marcus Aurelius as Kosmokrator-Apollo stands at the nodal point of the universe. The locus of power in Renaissance Rome again assumed a cosmic perspective.

(262-64)

We can appreciate Michelangelo's accomplishment and at the same time be thankful that epic revived at a distance from this center of aspiring power. As he reworked the Boiardian material, developing both its imperial and dynastic aspects in order to reshape it into something more closely resembling Vergil's prestigious epic, Ariosto inevitably encountered a resistance of his material to his form. Temporally, Ferrara's Este rulers, the dynastic heirs of Ruggiero and Bradamante, are the focus of the poem's epideictic rhetoric and the ultimate beneficiaries of its heroic action. Spatially, however, the discrepancy between Ferrara's modest realm and Augustus's universal empire could only contribute to the poem's irony, no less than does the fortuitous naming of the Este family's own unherculean Ercole. Prevented from imitating Vergil's carefully unified spatio-temporal framework, Ariosto instead intensified his poem's internal generic tensions by retaining Paris's function as the poem's romance court centering characters' cycles of emanation and return and at the same time developing Carlo's capital into the poem's epic "ombilico a Franzia, anzi nel core" (XIV.104). Out of such fortuitous tensions and discrepancies rose an enormously influential work that would restore epic's relevance to a world growing ever more resistant to the genre's ideological hegemonism.

I

The relationship of *Orlando furioso* to the texts and categories of epic and romance is no less controversial in our century than it was in Ariosto's own. Patricia Parker, David Quint, and Sergio Zatti, to name only three of the most substantial recent examiners of the relationship, disagree about particular points as much as they agree that some kind of synthesis or interplay of the two forms constitutes the poem's most fundamental artistic innovation. My own analysis will approach the issue in a way that may provide new insight into the nature of this generic interaction and into one particular example of the way Ariosto's innovation influenced the innovation of another poet in a very different cultural context. Ariosto's historical moment afforded him mastery of these two generic traditions, which, despite their resemblance in many of the outer trappings of the heroic quest, were fundamentally opposed in their generic core, and most specifically in what Bakhtin calls their chronotope, their genre-defining space-time structure.¹ Let us consider first the epic chronotope systematized and established as paradigmatic in the *Aeneid*. Philip Hardie rightly emphasizes the systematic nature of the *Aeneid*'s fusion of socio-historical *urbs* and universal *orbs* into a consistent cosmic spatiality. To summarize Hardie's work in the prevalent vocabulary of historians of religion: the setting, action, imagery, and even the hyperbolic rhetoric of Vergilian epic are patterned through the epic's focus on Rome as omphalos, the cosmic center that both orders the horizontal space around it and establishes a vertical *axis mundi* as a hierarchical index of being and value.² To this we must add the observation, though this has now become an almost automatic critical assumption, that epic's sacred spatiality is accompanied by a relentlessly teleological temporality. As Sarah Mack explains, in the *Aeneid* "the task of the present is to move toward the future and become it. . . . The present is never an end in itself; it is merely a step forward, an obstacle in the path of something still to come" (3). This valorization of the *telos* is manifest in ways that extend beyond current assumptions about plot closure. On a large scale it is manifest in such epic phenomena as etiological myths and the ideal of an unbroken, cataloguable dynastic lineage as the measure of heroic success and imperial legitimacy. On a small scale it is manifest, perhaps more importantly, in the causal-progressive movement of the hero as he overcomes

¹ Bakhtin's fullest development of the idea of the chronotope occurs in the essay "Forms of Time and the Chronotope of the Novel," in *Dialogic Imagination*. Although I find the idea of the genre-defining chronotope useful, I do not find Bakhtin's application of the idea to be accurate with respect to both epic and romance. Acknowledging as well that all works are to some extent generically mixed, I refer in this essay to a text's generic "dominant," following the definition of Roman Jakobson: "the focussing component of a work of art: it rules, determines and transforms the remaining components" (82).

² For various approaches to space and time in epic, see also Fichter, Greene, and DiCesare. The most thorough recent work by a historian of religion on sacred space and time is Smith's *To Take Place*.

obstacles in his drive toward the center, the endpoint of his quest. Both epic's omphalic space and its teleological time are thoroughly rationalized, in an Aristotelian sense, relying on a studiously developed framework of spatial contiguity and temporal continuity that allows us to follow and assess the action. "The first quality of the epic imagination," Thomas Greene observes, "is expansiveness, the impulse to extend its own luminosity in ever widening circles" (7). What Greene is describing is an imperialism of rationality, an impulse to extend a particular kind of cosmic order ever outward from the center. Systematic ordering is evident throughout epic space-time. The rational mappability of the setting allows us to determine the hero's success or failure in terms of adherence to the trajectory of his assigned quest. The Iliadic Aeneas must not swerve in battle, and the Odyssean Aeneas must not swerve in his pilgrimage toward the future Capitol. When he does swerve, a vertical intervention returns him to the proper path. Such vertical interventions across precisely delineated cosmic planes make the epic "marvelous" a rational one. Vergilian epic may generate mystery, ambiguity, and irony, but the causal line of the action remains clear, and the subversive meanings that an entire school of modern Vergilians (in my view reasonably) finds in the *Aeneid* can only be seen against the background of the epic dominant's clear, imperially oriented, standards of judgment.

The epic chronotope regularized by Vergil would not have sustained its appeal across so many centuries had it not participated in habits of thought common to both classical and Judaeo-Christian cultures. The hero's forward drive and the poet's glorification of his patron, who is the current link in the poem's dynasty and the eventual beneficiary of its action, combine to form a teleology compatible with the Christian sense of progress toward salvation. Spatially, the Christian earth, centered in holy Jerusalem or papal Rome and organized vertically in cosmic planes, easily accommodates the pagan omphalic model. In the application of spatial parameters to heroic ethics, the two traditions are no less compatible. Biblical injunctions to follow the straight and narrow path fit well with Greco-Roman moral geometry; in steadfastly maintaining his linear path, the epic hero imitates both Old Testament exemplars and Plato's Phaedrian charioteer, who, as he maintains his straight course despite the sideways pull of the passions, is himself an heir to a long-held Greek preference for the straight over the crooked.

Vergilian epic's chronotopic coherence and compatibility with Christian ethics made it an unavoidable model for the aspiring heroic poet of the Renaissance. A second heroic model forming part of the Renaissance resources of kind inevitably found its way as well into heroic narrative. The tradition of long verse narratives initiated in France around the middle of the twelfth century, and soon after that labeled "romans" for their use of the vernacular, continued into the Renaissance. These romances constitute a distinct generic tradition because they too gave rise to a system of substantial chronotopic

coherence. Romance evolved from, and in many ways continued to resemble, both classical epic and the *chanson de geste*, which shared a broad range of generic features with its classical predecessor. As a result of such extensive overlapping among generic categories, the internecine interactions of epic and romance generated the cinquecento's most intense critical quarrels. Romance also, like pastoral, distinguished itself from its generic kin through meaningful oppositions. The most exploitable set of oppositions derived from the genre's return to the cyclical, sacred temporality that had been replaced in epic's mythic substratum by a rigorous teleology. Instead of the historical or pseudo-historical setting of epic, romance creates a more fully fictional and timeless setting dependent upon cyclical patterns. More often than not, medieval romances begin on a specific feast, such as Easter or Pentecost, a detail that launches the action into the cycles of the liturgical and sidereal years, often combining divine sanction with the restorative energies of spring. The romance hero may be assigned quests to perform, and he may pursue them with all the goal-orientation of his epic counterpart, but these quests are subsumed within a larger cyclical pattern of repeatability rather than within the relentless teleology demanded by Vergilian *imperium*. Indeed, the romance hero may simply cast himself into the currents of adventure, relying upon chance more than directed labor to fulfill his heroic mission as knight errant.

Romance replaces the linear unity of epic's plots based on such overarching, goal-oriented actions as the siege, *nostos*, pilgrimage, or *translatio* with cyclical patterns of procession and return that open new representational possibilities for structures of repetition. For courtly romances, the closest relative to classical epic, the court retains a horizontal omphalic function as the origin and goal of proceeding and returning actions. But the romance center, although it remains a source of ethical and other values, has lost most of the epic center's function as an *axis mundi* indexing these values on a vertical scale. The vertical dimension, in fact, is generally suppressed in romance. In a world of horizontal immanence rather than vertical transcendence, gods do not descend as part of a causal sequence nudging the hero back onto the straight and narrow path. Rather, the romance hero wanders through a landscape — the forest setting popularized by Chrétien is symptomatic — in which the marvelous may manifest itself at any time, without causal origins or motivations. Instead of divine interventions, we witness miracles (effects without causes) and magic of a mysterious nature. The romance court's more tenuous centering is also reflected in pervasive moral ambiguities and in the new prominence assigned to the individual, whose quest need not be subordinated to a collective project, and who receives more sustained attention because of the isolation he experiences on his quest and because of the more problematic nature of his self-fashioning. The self remains a site of conflict. But if the epic self is shaped by the struggle between cosmic and chaotic forces, between the deflecting energies of eros and furor and the aligning forces of divine assistance and heroic repression, the

oppositions shaping the romance self lack a similar evaluative clarity. Romance commonly pits the hero's familial or societal against his erotic allegiances, but it does not assign one of these unqualified moral superiority. As a result, or more precisely, as one correlative feature of romance among many in a coherent chronotopic system, romance endings are generally qualified, inconclusive, ambiguous.³

II

As *Orlando furioso* begins, the romance action of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* appears to be undergoing metamorphosis into epic action. Orlando has just returned with Angelica from his adventures "in India, in Media, in Tartaria" (I.5). Not a mere listing of Boiardo's exotic locales, this series emphasizes the fabulous nature of Orlando's exploits by progressing northward toward less familiar locations and by culminating in a region that, as Michael Murrin notes, was represented by a blank space in the maps of the Este library (226). As they are being selected and ordered into an inversion of epic's hierarchizing of locations upwardly from periphery to center, such romance spaces are also being left behind, it would seem, replaced by a precisely located and literarily significant point of convergence "sotto i gran monti Pirenei" (I.5), the border between Christian and pagan worlds where the Carolingian material first took epic form. Carlo, however, does not evince the epic sagacity appropriate to a Holy Roman Emperor. Instead of allowing "l'arme" to rule and transform "gli amori" (I.1), he confuses generic motivations by offering Angelica as the reward for heroic action:

in premio promettendola a quel d'essi
ch'in quel conflitto, in quella gran giornata,
degli infideli più copia uccidessi,
e di sua man prestassi opra più grata.
(I.9)

³ It is the romance forest's mystery, in large part evidenced through vague geography and missing causes and motivations, not infernal associations, that makes it a "perilleuse" location. Bringing to medieval romance the Renaissance association of the dark forest with the infernal ignores an important ambiguity in medieval literature. See Kohler and Ajam. Sklute relates the moral ambiguity of medieval romance to the new Aristotelian epistemology of the thirteenth century. Hanning offers explanations of late medieval individualism based on broader social developments, including the decline of the socially mobilizing barbarian threat and "a new grasp of Latin as a literary language capable of expressing personal reactions in all their ambiguity" (2). Parker's is the most developed argument about the inconclusiveness of romance endings, and about the opposition of epic and romance modes. Parker's work strays into error, in my view, from a failure to recognize epic's systematic assimilation of romance as a subordinate genre. For a provocative look at the Vulgate Cycle's use of digressive and repetitive structures, see Burns.

The result is stated with paratactic delicacy: "Contrari ai voti poi furo i successi" (I.9). In a series of subtle generic modulations, the poem has moved toward epic and then away, shifting focus from exotic Asia to Carlo, "attendato alla compagna" (I.5) with the assembled armies of Christendom prepared for the great day's conflict with the infidels, to unseen defeat and the "padiglione abbandonato" (I.9) of Angelica and her protector.

The Christian defeat produces the centrifugal dispersion, characteristic of romance beginnings, into the forest landscape that will dominate Cantos I-XIII and large sections of Cantos XVIII to XXIX. It is appropriate that the movement into this quintessentially romance setting is begun by Angelica's flight, for it is her specialized function to lead Ariosto's knights into "error." Since the moral and epistemological aspects of this error-errancy have been explored by a number of critics, to consider it in further detail would be superfluous here.⁴ But it remains worth noting that Ariosto's forest, like his heroine, serves a very specialized purpose, and one that represents a revision of previous romance practice. Knights from Chrétien to Boiardo suffered the ordeals and entanglements of the romance forest, but they did not suffer the more systematic punishment meted out by Ariosto.

In *Orlando innamorato*, which deploys epic features in counterpoint to its romance dominant, the moral import of the knights' dispersion is obscured by inconsistent motivation among the pagans. Gradasso's desire to "vincere e disfare / quanto il sol vede e quanto cinge il mare" (*OI* I.i.7) immediately establishes an epic context (in counterpoint to the romance context established by the Pentecostal gathering of knights), and the fears Boiardo evokes for "nostra fede santa" (I.i.7) let the reader know unequivocally the moral alignment of this conflict. But Boiardo just as quickly drops all moral pretense when he introduces Angelica, sent by her father who, for reasons apparently not worth mentioning, wishes to collect heroes in his dungeon: "tutti legati li vol nelle mane / re Galifrone, il maledetto cane" (I.i.40). Helpless before their instant passion, the knights disperse and drift without significant moral taint eastward through forests and other romance settings to Albraca, where Angelica alternately titillates and spurns both Christian and pagan knights without regard to race, creed, or national origin. Only with the second book, and the second invasion, this time by Agramante, does a situation exist in which the knights' collective mission might conflict with individual desire. But despite Boiardo's delight in seeing Orlando "da Amor vinto, al tutto subiugato" (I.1.2), his theme never really becomes the conflict between "l'arme" and "gli amori," or between any other morally defined polarities.

Ariosto's application of an epic dominant to the materials inherited from Boiardo is most evident in his imposition of a moral framework upon the knights' flight into the forest, which is condemned in the strongest possible

⁴ See, for example, Parker, Came-Ross, Griffin, Donato, Javitch.

terms. As the Saracen forces move against Paris, the defense of the city takes on apocalyptic overtones. Amidst frantically ringing church bells, the desperate prayers of the populace, and young soldiers begging to die for their faith (XIV.100-03), the city "ne l'ombilico a Francia" becomes the sacred center to be defended at all costs. Both the consequences of defeat and the epic stature of the conflict are reinforced by Rodomonte's singlehanded penetration to the very center of the city, where he stands, in a simile combining Christian symbolism with Vergil's description of Pyrrhus at Priam's threshold, "come uscito di tenebre serpente" (XVII.11). The epic elevation of these episodes, clearly designed to elicit the contemporary audience's memory of recent Moslem attacks upon the Italian homeland, shows forth through any screen of irony we might find superimposed upon them and supports the sharp moral contrast between the defending heroes and the erring knights pursuing an Angelica ever-withdrawing in the forest. This contrast appears with utmost clarity when we compare, as the Vergilian allusions insist that we do, the high heroics of the siege scene with Orlando's restless thoughts before his abandonment of Charles and the Christian cause. Paris and "il santo Imperio" (VIII.69) have just been saved, for the moment, by intervention from above:

Il sommo Creator gli occhi rivolse
al giusto lamentar del vecchio Carlo;
e con subita pioggia il fuoco tolse:
né forse uman saper potea smorzarlo.
Savio chiunque a Dio sempre si volse;
ch'altri non poté mai meglio aiutarlo.
Ben dal devoto re fu conosciuto,
che si salvò per lo divino aiuto.
(VIII.70)

The scene's spatial terms — the horizontal enclosure of the siege, the repeated vocabulary of "turning" upward and downward that describes the proper relationship between Creator and creature — are echoed and transformed in the microcosmic description that follows:

La notte Orlando alla noiose piume
del veloce pensier fa parte assai.
Or quinci or quindi il volta, or lo rassume
tutto in un loco, e non l'afferma mai:
qual d'acqua chiara, il tremolante lume,
dal sol percossa o da' notturni rai'
per gli ampi tetti va con lungo salto
a destra et a sinistra, e basso et alto.
(VIII.71)

As D. S. Carne-Ross points out, "the simile in the last four lines is closely adapted from *Aeneid* 8.22-25 where it is used to describe the inner tension in Aeneas' mind as he lies awake contemplating the approaching Italian campaign" (224). The parody is multiple: of the honorable Christian's steadfast resistance; of the "cuncta videns" Aeneas' thorough military preparation as he "omnia versat" and yet casts his thoughts high but not low, much less to the sinister left; of epic's vertical and horizontal expansiveness. The heroes' subsequent dreams are also meant to be contrasted: the prophetic visitation by Tiberinus, who instructs Aeneas on how to locate the Roman imperial center; and Orlando's Petrarchan nightmare, in which he runs blindly through the stormy forest searching desperately "e quindi e quinci," only to receive a prophecy on the futilities of the horizontal plane: "No sperar più gioirne in terra mai" (VIII.83). The implicit condemnation is redoubled when the passage is seen to allude forward to Rodomonte's Turnus-like *aristeia*, for nothing could be farther from the Saracen's fiery and unswerving incursion into Paris than Orlando's prone and watery vision of trembling moonbeams.

While Rodomonte's *aristeia* is elevating him to the status of foremost epic hero in the first half of the *Furioso*, the relentlessly linear nature of his trajectory across the walls and into the city's heart is strengthening the contrast with the errancy of the forest scenes. Although several critics have commented on the pervasive use of the verb "girare" in the poem, it appears to have gone unnoticed that Ariosto is employing a traditional image of infernal torment. When, for example, Ferraù ends up where he had started after a futile search for Angelica, or Bradamante searching for Ruggiero finds herself back at the point of departure (I.31; XXIII.9), Ariosto is alluding to a tradition with origins in Psalms 11:9: "In circuitu impii ambulant." This is the same kind of futile motion Dante observes in the first circle of hell:

E io, che riguardai, vidi una 'nsegna
che girando correva tanto ratta,
che d'ogne posa mi parea indegna;
(*Inferno* III.52-54)

In the forest and in Atlante's enchanted palace, which is but a reduced, architectural version of the forest, the knights are revealed to be doubly cursed. *Impii* because they are away from the epic action, they nevertheless cannot free themselves from the *labor* that the *pious* epic hero must endure.

Ariosto's conversion of the romance forest from a morally neutral place of testing and irruptions of the marvelous into an infernal space invites us to make additional Dantean glosses upon his complex interplay of genres. In the terms of *Inferno* I, epic represents the "diritta via" (both Rodomonte's straight path and the morally "right" choice *a dritta*), while romance represents the "selva oscura" entered when the straight path is lost or abandoned. The Dantean subtext also

suggests that a way can be found back into the light, perhaps even that entering the *selva* is a necessary or at least inevitable step along this tragicomic way. Significantly, before they return to full epic stature, the knights who contribute most to the Christian cause (excepting the always exceptional Astolfo, whose idiosyncratic way of participating in the pattern is to become a tree himself and to be first encountered, already the wiser, in that significant form early in the poem) are immersed into an intensified, more fully *oscura* version of the forest. Rinaldo's experience in the forest of Ardennes is the most fully allegorical of the series:

Poi che fu dentro a molte miglia andato
il paladin pel bosco avventuroso,
da ville e da castella allontanato,
ove aspro era più il luogo e periglioso,
tutto in un tratto vide il ciel turbato,
sparito il sol tra nuvoli nascoso,
ed uscìr fuor d'una caverna oscura
un strano mostro in femminil figura.
(XLII.46)

To escape this "Furia infernal" (XLII.50), Rinaldo plunges even deeper into the forest:

Nel più tristo sentier, nel peggior calle
scorrendo va, nel più intricato bosco,
ove ha più asprezza il balzo, ove la valle
è più spinosa, ov'è l'aer più fosco,
così sperando tòrsi de la spalle
quel brutto, abominoso, orrido tòsco;
(XLII.52)

Just as Vergil arrives to guide Dante, so at Rinaldo's crisis a knight arrives to serve as "guida e duca" "per trarlo fuor de' luoghi oscuri e bui" (XLII.59). The knight is Wrath himself ("Ira"), who by curing Rinaldo of his desire for Angelica (67) allows his eventual return to the Christian camp. Epic and romance have been overlaid to create a new kind of space. In this paradoxically liminal center, far from the epic center and in the dense heart of the forest, psychological change comes about through fluidly interchanging epic and romance features: the monstrous woman of the cave, who is also a fury risen in epic fashion from hell; a knight in shining armor, who is also a celestial guide.

Bradamante too strays down a path

che la portò dov' era spesso e forte,
dove più strano e più solingo il bosco,
lasciando il sol già il mondo all' aer fosco. (XXIII.5)

Here she also encounters personified Wrath:

— L'ira — dicea — m'ha dal mio amor disgiunta:
almen ci avessi io posta alcuna mira,
poi ch'avea pur la mala impresa assunta,
di saper ritornar donde io veniva;
(XXIII.7)

The wrath she is lamenting is the fury she evinced in slaying Pinabello. In repenting her fury, she begins a process of subordinating her martial inclinations to the love that will allow her to achieve the poem's dynastic marriage to Ruggiero. Her eventual partner's own plunge into the "folto bosco, ove più spesse / l'ombre frasche e più intricate vede" (XLV.92) ends when Leo, having persuaded the tearful Ruggiero to reveal his identity, renounces his claims on Bradamante. Finally, Orlando's wandering "per mezzo il bosco alla più oscura frasca" (XXIII.124) occurs at the poem's most pivotal moment, between his discovery of Angelica's "infidelity" and the full onset of his madness. Leaving "questo inferno" (XXIII.128) at sunrise, he sheds all emotions but "odio, rabbia, ira e furore" (XXIII.129) and begins the destruction of the landscape foretold in his dream. In this instance the center of the forest leads farther downward into the inferno, but even Orlando's madness, a more intense but otherwise analogous version of a nearly universal love-madness, is a mark of his supreme heroic stature, and a necessary step in his renunciation of Angelica for a higher, epic calling.

A story line within the movement of dispersion meriting especially close attention to generic interplay is Ruggiero's voyage to Alcina's island and back. In this remarkably rich sequence, Ariosto superimposes epic and romance journeys to create a mythographic palimpsest. Critics have long acknowledged the importance of Hercules's adventures as a mythic subtext. In the fullest treatment of the subject, Eduardo Saccone demonstrates that both Orlando and Ruggiero are assigned Herculean roles: "l'Ercole del titolo genera due eroi, le cui traiettorie sono insieme analoghe e opposte" (201). Ruggiero's side of the story is of particular relevance to my subject, for the allusions to Hercules begin (after the poem's compliment to the "generosa Ercolea prole") with an important geographical reference. Borne aloft on the hippogryph, Ruggiero is quickly swept beyond the confines of Europe:

Lasciato avea di gran spazio distante
tutta l'Europa, ed era uscito fuore
per molto spazio il segno che prescritto
avea già a' naviganti Ercole invito.
(VI.17)

The mythic figure here invoked is of course a favorite of Renaissance humanists: the patron of Reason; the hero of peerless *virtus* whose name was believed to signify "gloria," whose epic "labors," socially constructive tasks performed in the service of King Eurystheus, embody the very notion of epic's universal expansiveness.⁵ G. S. Kirk summarizes the mythographic tradition of the labors, whose number and order contain a degree of logical arrangement well suited to epic:

First come the six tasks in the Peloponnese, mostly the disposal or capture of remarkable beasts. The second group of six lies outside the Peloponnese and indeed covers the known world; the first three take him south, north and east respectively, whereas he goes west in two of the last triad, which is strongly concerned with the underworld. (184)

Despite Ruggiero's trembling heart and lack of control, and despite the fact that it is Atlante's plan to keep his ward from a heroic destiny that is directing the hippogryph's flight, Ruggiero's epic destiny is here being — comically but triumphantly — announced.

After carrying Ruggiero over the ocean "per linea dritta e senza mai piegarsi" (19), the winged steed lapses into a familiar pattern. Sighting Alcina's isle, it descends "con larghe ruote" and "dopo un girarsi di gran tondo" it deposits the hero in a romance setting (20). As Saccone notes, here Ruggiero makes the famous Herculean choice *in bivio*, and then reenacts Hercules's degrading subjection to Omphale. He can escape only after Melissa, with her "anello de la ragion" (VIII.2), her reference to Ruggiero's Herculean upbringing (VII.57), and her admonition to become "un Alessandro, un Iulio, un Scipio" (59), has made him see the compound "errors" of his ways. But we must wonder why, or rather how, the Herculean Ruggiero is so easily led astray. How is it that, despite Astolfo's warnings and the right choice "a man destra" (VI.60) at the crossroads, Ruggiero walks so blindly into the clutches of Alcina? One answer is that the palimpsestic landscape, a space suggestive of the refusal of Renaissance realities to respond to readable inherited models of conduct, obscures and distorts the Herculean itinerary.

The passing of Hercules's pillars invokes not only the great etiological hero who established them, but also Ruggiero's most noteworthy predecessor in passing beyond them: Ulysses of *Inferno* XXVI, no longer the hero of epic *nostos*, but of a romance journey away from the center into the unmappable. To Dante's Ulysses, the pillars are markers erected "acciò che l'uom più oltre no si metta." Nevertheless, abandoning (after a pointed reference to Aeneas) the "pietà" owed his present family and his progeny, Ulysses sets out "di retro al

⁵ The major discussions of the Renaissance Hercules include Panofsky and Galinsky. For Ariosto's use of Hercules, see Saccone and Ascoli.

sol," enters the Atlantic ("de' remi facemmo ali in al folle volo,/ sempre acquistando dal lato mancino"), and upon reaching the antipodal mountain isle is destroyed by a "turbo" that spins his ship around ("Tre volte il fé girar con tutte l'acque"), plunging the overly ambitious hero and crew to the bottom of the sea. Ruggiero's auspicious journey, we might say, is undermined by the hubristic counter-voyage of Ulysses. Although he adheres to the sun's path along the Tropic of Cancer (IV.50) without Ulysses's sinister deviation to the south (like Aeneas's within the confines of the Mediterranean), he too encounters disaster at the antipodes as he spirals down to Alcina's mountainous isle. Piling irony upon irony, Ariosto punishes Ruggiero for abandoning the epic, dynastic responsibilities he does not yet know he has by making Atlante send him ostensibly out of harm's way.

As if the two conflicting journeys were not enough to confuse both Ruggiero and our own understanding of epic's evaluative spatiality here, Ariosto compounds the confusion with a third palimpsestic layer. Herculean Ruggiero's choice at the crossroads takes him "al monte" (VI.60); but when the combination of monstrous opponents and seductive helpers has coaxed him onto the smooth and easy road leading "per la pianura" (60) toward Alcina's palace, the trek, mysteriously, does not grow easier. Ruggiero finds himself climbing once again:

Alquanto malagevole et aspretta
per mezzo un bosco presero la via,
che oltra che sassosa fosse e stretta,
quasi su dritta alla collina già.
Ma poi che furo ascesi in su la vetta,
uscìro in spaziosa prateria,
dove il più bel palazzo e 'l più giocondo
vider, che mai fosse veduto al mondo.
(VII.8)

At the top, he finds "gli angelici sembianti nati in cielo" (15) and a terrestrial "paradiso" (13). The landscape has been transformed into a setting of counterfeit Dantean *askesis*. To escape such a place Herculean *virtus* will not suffice. In his aspect as Dantean everyman, Ruggiero must cross a "spiaggia erma et aprica" (VIII.21) that recalls the desert shores of *Inferno* I and *Purgatorio* II, overcome Dantean beasts (one of which, in a small but funny allusion, tries to bite him on the "piede manco," VIII.8, to render infirm Dante's crucial "piè fermo" of *Inferno* I.30), and, finally, like a spirit being ferried to purgatory (*Purg.* II.27), be carried across the water to Logistilla's haven by an old "galeotto" (X.44).⁶ After a refresher course in heroic *virtus* as Logistilla's palace, Astolfo remounts the hippogryph to "finir tutto il cominciato tondo" (X.70). Equipped with new

⁶ Freccero (29-54) thoroughly explains Dante's use of the left foot as part of his poem's systematic spatiality.

knowledge and the ring of reason, a symbol of his own circumnavigation, Ruggiero can now become a Herculean hero worthy of the great age of exploration, extending epic luminosity into the widest of possible earthly circles: the great globe itself. All of this is accomplished, it should be understood, on the wings of romance, by means of a circular flight on a fabulous beast imported from a land "molto di là dagli aghiacciati mari" (IV.18). But this epic assimilation of the cyclical on the large scale does not carry over to smaller-scale action. Ruggiero's progress is soon halted as he rescues Angelica, loses the ring, and returns to an infernal brand of circling. With Angelica's disappearance Ruggiero "intorno all fontana / brancolando n'andava come cieco" (XI.9).

Not content with the epic potential realized through Ruggiero's generically mixed circumnavigation, Ariosto balances this early journey with Astolfo's symmetrically placed excursion late in the poem. The two episodes are intimately linked, not only through sharing a dense allusiveness that have made them the poem's most discussed episodes, but also in the way they cooperate in employing geography in the service of epic expansiveness. The vehicle for Astolfo is once again the romance hippogryph, inherited as a kind of reward and *translatio* for freeing Ruggiero from Atlante's enchanted palace. Like the earlier journey, and like the poem as a whole, this journey takes the liminal Pyrenees as its point of departure (XXXIII.96). Astolfo, too, passes "la meta che pose / ai primi naviganti Ercole invito" (98), but the very recurrence of this salient detail, and perhaps the openly Dantean emphasis on the pillars' role not as neutral "segno" now but as proscribing "meta," highlight the fact that Astolfo's overall trajectory is perpendicular to that of Ruggiero. His southward crossing of the strait avoids the transgressive implications of Ruggiero's westward crossing and introduces no confusing mythographic palimpsest. Moreover, once Astolfo has wandered eastward to the Nile, we see that the journey is intended to trace a north-to-south line along the Nile to Nubia: "Alla città di Nubia il camin tenne / tra Dobada e Coalle in aria a filo" (101). In fact, when projected upon the map of the world, the two journeys together trace a system of perpendicular coordinates running east and west along the Tropic of Cancer and north and south down the Nile, corresponding with surprising exactness to that used in the T-O maps, which from the sixth century to the Renaissance served Europe as the primary emblematic representation of the world.⁷ When we add to these facts the hippogryph's origin in the exotic far north of the Urals ("nei monti Rifei"), Ariosto's version of the North Pole and conventionally the northern endpoint of the meridian defined by the Nile, we see that Ariosto has inscribed his action, quite literally, from the top to the bottom of the earth and all the way round. Lifted by the soaring imagination of romance, epic expansiveness has covered and mapped the world.

The descent from heaven in Canto XIV was for the archangel Michael an

⁷ The best account of the T-O map system remains that by Raymond Beazely.

exercise in frustration, and for Ariosto a declaration through both action and tone of (to translate Greene's analysis into my own) the "clear independence of Humanist and Christian traditions" (119) of epic verticality. Communication between cosmic planes occurs in the world of the *Furioso*. Indeed, it is quite true that the Ineffable Goodness of the poem is a deity "ch'invano / non fu pregata mai da cor fedele" (XIV.75), as we have seen in his intervention to save Paris. But Michele's comic difficulties imply that the days of easy epic commerce between celestial and earthly planes are gone, that epic's chronotope must be supported and complemented by romance's if the heroic poem is to represent modern reality. One of the most important functions of Astolfo's journey is to strengthen this implication. When he reaches the southernmost point of his journey Astolfo is not able, unlike Hercules, to "penetrar la terra fin al centro / e le bolgie infernal cercare intorno" (XXXIV.5). With the hippogryph's aid he can reach "alla maggiore altezza de la terra" (XXXVII.24) and taste the apples of Eden, certainly no mean feat, but even the divine chariot of Elias will lift him only to the "ciel più basso" (23), a destination far below that usually reached by the cosmic voyagers of literature. It is consistent with the strong contrast established here between an exuberant earthly expansion and a carefully limited ability to leave the terrestrial plane that Astolfo reacts with wonder not at the earth's insignificance but at the moon's surprising largeness. The conventional *contemptus mundi* of celestial ascent has no place in a poem that at every turn both celebrates its emphatically human author's "alto ingegno" and demonstrates the ineluctable errancy of "il giudicio uman."

Astolfo's journey to the moon takes part in the poem's ultimately decisive, if somewhat unsteady, turn toward closure. With the return of Orlando's wits the war is won, the heroes converge upon Paris to be welcomed in a cosmos-affirming triumph that positively parodies Rodomonte's chaotic incursion, and the dynastic marriage is arranged. Patricia Parker argues that this closural reintroduction of epic structures is specious. Because St. John in the ascent episode appears to reduce even the Gospel to the status of a literary fiction, she argues, in Ariosto's radically skeptical vision "the exercise of closure, under the sign of a guiding Providence, remains a purely literary tour de force, a demonstration that the creator of this 'varia tela' knows as well as the Weaver Fates (XXXIV.89) how to bring his carefully woven 'text' to an end" (52). But this reading begins in a contradiction that assigns John the authority to remove his own and others' authority, when in fact John is implicated in a version of the "liar's paradox," which prevents a liar from convincing us he is lying. Rather than ending in radical skepticism, the poem concludes by affirming the prudential epistemology and morality of its epic dominant, and at the same time acknowledging that the irrational energies represented by the romance chronotope can be of value, and perhaps even invaluable.

III

Spenser's *Legend of Holiness*, the subject of the remainder of this essay, intensifies the process of generic interplay by which Ariosto revitalized the epic genre. As we follow the *translatio studii* northward to consider the effort to "overgo" his predecessors Spenser announced in a letter to Gabriel Harvey (*Works* 9:471), we encounter cultural conditions that at first might seem to invite closer adherence to the Vergilian paradigm. An emerging empire expanding from a center that was both an unchallenged seat of political power and Europe's most populous city, "the most taut and vigorous national society in Europe" (Rowse 1) was a fit subject indeed for a literary form founded on the concept of *imperium sine fine* centered in space and "originated" in time. Unlike the Ferrarese poets, who faced an awkward, if ultimately productive, discrepancy between the limitations of a small duchy and the universality of Vergilian empire, the English poet had no need for the compromising structural maneuver of dividing the spatial seat of empire from the temporal origin of the patron's dynasty. But if English nationalism invited epic composition, English Protestantism presented considerable challenges in the form of new attitudes toward space and time.

Protestants of every persuasion looked at best with ambivalence upon the omphalic cosmology that underlay epic and Catholicism. On the one hand, traditional manifestations of sacred spatiality — altars and the anointed priests who presided over them, cathedrals with their cosmic architecture, the monasteries' *paradisus claustris*, the *caput mundi* at Rome — became primary targets of the Reformers' iconoclasm. On the other hand, at the same time that Protestants were denouncing such symptoms of papist ritualism and materialism, they were also giving new life to their spiritual equivalents. Attempting to reach back across centuries of Catholic corruption to recover the purer practices of the early Church, Protestants focused on the Pauline imagery of the individual believer and the spiritual community as temple and on the Augustinian imagery of pilgrimage as movement toward the celestial city. The writer of Protestant epic, inheriting as an essential, defining part of the genre's tradition a spatiality that could easily be seen to support the Catholic world-view, would at the very least have to locate his poem's action in a setting that negotiated the relation between the literal and the figurative in new ways.

Ideological cross-currents were equally treacherous with respect to time. The reformer's diligent approach to active engagement in the world, what we now view as the proverbial Protestant "work ethic," found a natural correspondence in epic's emphasis on ceaseless heroic *labor* toward a predetermined goal. In the Protestant moral vision one must always remain, like Redcrosse as he approaches Errour's den, "resolving forward still to fare" (I.i.11). Contrasting Spenser with Shakespeare on this point is instructive. The characters of Shakespeare's festive comedy and romance generally benefit from

withdrawal into the green world of cyclical time, where an openness to what the moment may bring holds greater potential for lasting benefit than does steadfast adherence to a path of predetermined action. Even for Shakespeare's tragic characters, the operation of declining fortune often involves single-minded adherence to an established plan. In this sense, we can say that Shakespeare's imagination, in contrast to Spenser's, remains rooted in the more rural, medieval, pre-Reformation reality of ritual and holiday that more sober forces were laboring to excise from the reformed commonwealth. However, the Protestant poet also faced a considerable obstacle to aligning his moral vision with epic's goal-directed temporality. The important precursors to Protestant epic—medieval forms that owed their sense of directed quest to earlier epic models, pre-Reformation Christian epics that assimilated Vergilian structures, and humanist allegorizations that translated the classical epic quest into terms compatible with Christian ethics — all relied upon the related assumptions that heroic stature was earned through labor and that the hero's itinerary proceeded from a state of sin to a state of salvation. In asserting that only faith, and not good works, was required for salvation, the reformers in effect challenged the moral validity of the epic chronotope. If justification is an unmerited, freely bestowed act of divine mercy, and if predestination blurs (or in its extreme version completely eliminates) the distinction between the state of the elected saint's soul in the world and in the hereafter, then the traditional epic itinerary is no longer an adequate imitation of life. Yet, even if central principles of Reform logically eliminated the need to earn one's salvation, Protestants hoping to promote a moral society could hardly afford to let this fact imply that good works were unnecessary. Richard Hooker, for example, the most influential Elizabethan theorizer on justification, simply warned that although "we teach that faith alone justifieth . . . we by this speech never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable mates with faith in the man that is justified; or works being added as necessary duties" (I, 59). Admonitions against drawing a logical but misleading conclusion might have sufficed for the preacher, but for the Protestant poet who would educate his audience by portraying the exemplary life, there remained a fundamental challenge of reconciling the theological idea of necessary but undirected duties with the generic convention of directed heroic labor.

Developments in figural hermeneutics created challenges and opportunities no less momentous. The most significant change in this regard began when Reformers promoted the typological method to replace what Luther found nonsensical in the medieval exegetical tradition associated with Origen and the School of Alexandria. As Barbara Lewalski has demonstrated in several studies of Protestant typology, this rejection of earlier allegorical practices as activities of human "fancy" and violations of the literal text did not lead to more restrained and objective readings of scripture. Rather, the Protestant tendency "to regard history as a continuum rather than as two eras of time divided by the Incarnation

of Christ" (128) encouraged the extension of typological readings beyond the conventional pattern, in which an Old Testament type foreshadowed a New Testament antitype, to more flexible approaches, and ultimately to a habit of thinking in which one continually referred to universal Christian history for exemplars, noting similarities and differences. It has long been recognized that the poet who named his epic after a "true glorious type" (i.Pr.4.7) of his sovereign exploited his culture's newly intensified typological habits. What has not been adequately appreciated is the extent to which Ariosto's method of generic interaction enabled him to do so.

Epic's emphasis on unity and inclusiveness, manifest in such diverse phenomena as imperial expansion, the unified plot, and the subordination of individual action to the collective endeavor, can be seen as well in its idealization of the hero's *integritas*, a wholeness often represented through the symbolic language of armor and the body. Aeneas recoils in horror as he recalls the headless corpse of Priam tossed on the Trojan shore; Ariosto's Mandricardo pursues Orlando to complete his collection of Hector's arms; Tasso's mystical body of crusaders fights ineffectively until its head and right arm act in unison. In the first stage of his project for overgoing Ariosto, Spenser translates epic *integritas* into a specifically Protestant ideal. William Nelson points points provocatively, though without further explanation, at Spenser's substantial innovation:

Had Spenser indeed intended to represent the Red Cross Knight in the process of attaining a state of grace I can only wonder that he did not show him winning that armor of a Christian man piece by piece, the shield of faith in one episode and the breastplate of righteousness in another until, fully armed at last, he is equipped to overthrow the dragon. But the whole armor of God is already his in the first stanza of the first canto. (174-75)

Preferring to view the knight's armor as something "which will not be truly his until he has earned it" (Berger 20), the conventional wisdom about Book I does not acknowledge the significance of the fact that Redcrosse enters the poem having already succeeded in attaining the status of a spiritually ennobled "patron" of integral wholeness. Clearly, the young and inexperienced knight has much to learn, but in fact the poem provides no evidence that he must "earn" his salvation, a requirement that would imply salvation by works and place Spenser in conflict with a central Protestant doctrine.

Redcrosse can enter his legend in full armor because he has already experienced "justification by faith." As if he were anticipating modern misconceptions about the armor's symbolism, Spenser offers us an explanatory gloss in the Letter to Raleigh. When the "tall clownishe younge man" presents himself at court in Cleopolis, he is declaring faithful adherence to all that the order of Gloriana's knights represents. It is important to note that, like the

sixteenth-century Protestant who must depend entirely upon God's mercy for his unmerited justification, he does not merit the "boone" that he receives, and that he is not required to succeed in his assigned good works before acquiring it. Nor is he simply granted, in the conventional romance manner, an adventure meant to test his worth, but more precisely "the *achievement* of any adventure, which during the feast should happen" (my emphasis). Given Spenser's militant Protestant viewpoint and his consistently traditional, etymological use of the term in his poetry, there can be no doubt that by "achievement" Spenser means precisely that: "completion, accomplishment, successful performance" (OED 1). To indicate the workings of election, as soon as Redcrosse is granted this achievement, Una enters with "the armour of a Christian man specified by St. Paul." He is told that "unlesse that armour which she brought, would serve him" (i.e., "fit" him, denoting his elected status), "he could not succeed in that enterprise." And of course the armor does fit him, as we knew from Gloriana's granted boon that it would, and as we know that he is destined to succeed in his enterprise, which is at once a specific quest in aid of the distressed Una and the allegorical pilgrimage of the Christian life. Redcrosse has been distinguished from those other knights who "for want of faith, or guilt of sin" (I.vii.45) have revealed themselves as not among the elect and have been slain by the dragon of Eden. An elected saint, Redcrosse as a warrior possesses a degree of immunity from ultimate failure that was unavailable before the Reformation; the fantastic invincibility acquired in romance through magic is now a theologically sanctioned reality applicable to extra-literary history, where the nation of the elect, by definition, is destined to succeed. Redcrosse must learn his identity as England's patron saint, but the reader sees the red cross of Saint George at the moment he enters the poem.

Redcrosse also overgoes earlier heroes by subsuming their many quests within his own as he journeys to an unprecedented number of traditional epic centers. Within Spenser's Platonic world of *complicatio* and *explicatio*, Redcrosse is subject to unfolding romance repetition and at the same time overcomes it by the fact that his repeated journeys also "infold," for they all are but types of the same ideal antitype. When we close Book I and reflect upon its hero's past and future trajectory, we recall that after journeying to Cleopolis the knight entered his legend pricking his horse toward Eden, that after numerous misadventures he ascended the Mount of Contemplation and gazed upon the New Jerusalem, that after continuing on to his destination and completing his assigned task he began his return to Cleopolis, from which he will proceed to a crusade against the Paynim king, apparently return at some point to Eden, and eventually arrive at the same heavenly city that he earlier approached on the mount. Spenser, it appears, is conducting an allusive grand tour of epic centers available from the continent. In considering Redcrosse's destinations, it is difficult not to recall Dante's mount of *ascesis* and its numerous Renaissance imitations, Tasso's Jerusalem, the Eden of the burgeoning tradition of hexameral

epic, even the contemplative paradise of Landino's allegorized *Aeneid*. The unitary nature of Redcross's quest, however, becomes apparent only when we, to use the poet's words from the Letter to Raleigh, gather "the whole intention of the conceit," and "in a handfull gripe all the discourse." In experiencing the "discourse" itself, in immersing ourselves in the confusing world of diachronic process that we share with the hero within his own legend, we become trained in the establishment of similarities and differences upon which this synchronic vision depends.

Spenser follows Ariosto in linking epic to a morally positive linear teleology and romance to cyclical patterns of infernal error. But Spenser incorporates the romance chronotope much more finely into the texture of his work. The romance settings of the *Orlando furioso*, although internally unmappable, can be located in relation to more orderly regions of epic historicity. Spenser locates his poem's action in a more fluid, indeterminate setting in which both readers and characters experience a continuous epistemological crisis of an intensity sustained by Ariosto only in the episode recounting Ruggiero's visit to Alcina's isle. Since St. George's ultimate success is not in doubt, Spenser can redirect our focus toward the very problematic process of living correctly in the time before the rewards of election are manifest. But ultimate success is perhaps the only thing not in doubt. Like Errour's den, which "Breedes dreadfull doubts" (i.12.4), the larger romance setting, for which this liminal setting serves — in the first of many doubt-breeding structural confusions — as both entrance and synecdoche, is designed to dramatize the new challenges of decentered Protestant existence. The hero's greatest challenges are no longer to defeat the enemy, but to recognize him (or her), and to orient himself in a world lacking reliable points of reference. Only by continually adding orienting faith unto his irresistible force can he live a life of holiness in a world thoroughly contaminated with multiplicity, infernal repetition, blurred distinctions. The Protestant hero's principal labor, in effect, is to distinguish between the *dritta via* and paths that lead nowhere, between epic and romance.

In the proem to Book I, Spenser asserts his poem's generic identity with painstaking thoroughness. He announces that he is leaving behind the "Oaten weeds" of pastoral for the epic "trumpets sterne" (Proem 1.4) of Vergilian *horrentia martis*, but in the new, mixed Renaissance manner, for like Ariosto he will "sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds" (1.5). Nor will he fail to satisfy the various requirements attached to epic by theorists and practitioners in Ariosto's wake. It will be an elevated poem directed at the Muse's "learned throng" (1.8), and "moralized" (1.9) through the didactic play of interacting generic features. Even without the proem's preparation, the reader would have no trouble detecting epic tonalities in the opening scene of canto i. The *in medias res* beginning reveals the knight pricking toward his goal with commendable rectilinearity upon the plain. Una's background economically

introduces the familiar ideas of dynastic succession and universal empire:

And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretched from East to Western shore,
And all the world in their subjection held.
(5.3-6)

The tempest of "angry Jove" promptly introduces epic verticality, and directs us allusively to Vergil's divinely initiated storms. Given this compact set of generic references, even the casually informed reader will not fail to suspect that within the nearby shady grove lies the labyrinth of romance error.

The reader can also only expect that in vanquishing the monster within the hero will free himself from the maze of infernal romance and resume the path of righteousness. Ariosto's series of scenes "per mezzo il bosco" certainly supports this expectation. Closely following the Ariostan pattern, Redcrosse's combat with personified Error "amid the thickest woods" (11.7) ends with the knight apparently resuming his linear progress along the *dritta via*:

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any by-way bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new adventure sought.
Long way he travelled, before he heard of ought.
(i.28)

The stanza's last two lines, however, should give us pause. Has Redcrosse forgotten the "great adventure" (3.1) assigned him by Gloriana and gone off in search of a new one? Has he given up the unitary epic quest to become a romance knight errant? Does he travel long before he hears not merely of aught, but of "ought," the moral obligation he assumed at the court of the Faerie Queene? The preceding stanza may contain an answer:

His ladie seeing all, that chaunst, from farre
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And said, Faire knight, borne under happy starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye:
Well worthy be you of that Armorie,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,

And henceforth ever wish, that like succeed it may.
(i.27)

Exploiting the secret wit of his archaic syntax, Spenser has made the meaning of Una's wish dangerously obscure. The theologically soundest reading would have Una wishing that many such knights succeed in the way hers has, that the success of this *miles* be repeated by all who put on the armor of Christ. The stanza as a whole lends considerable support to this reading. Since no less than eight pronouns or possessive adjectives preceding Una's wish refer to Redcrosse, emphasizing, as Hamilton explains, this "Knight's worthiness to wear the armour of Christ," he is a likely referent for "such" in line 8. A more natural way of reading, which assigns priority to the nearest logical antecedent—and which, significantly, reflects the tendency of natural language to inscribe within its syntactical patterns our dependence on temporal sequence—would understand "such" to refer to "adventure," and would have Una wishing either that Redcrosse succeed in the many adventures that he will face, or that many adventures "succeed" — i.e., follow — his first. The first of the two more natural readings is morally unexceptionable, for it simply assumes that life in our fallen world can be represented, accurately if unfortunately, as a series of adventures. The second, however, has the maiden whose name signifies unity in a variety of contexts, including epic's Aristotelian unity of action, actually advocating a form of fallen multiplicity that conflicts with her theological and generic significance. Redcrosse's desire for "new adventure" suggests that this last possibility, unfortunately, is the one he hears.

Accordingly, Redcrosse asks the first inhabitant of Faerie Land he meets, Archimago disguised as a devout hermit, where he might find the "straunge adventures" (30.4) that form the knight errant's vocation. Ironically, despite his wicked intentions (or is the clever enchanter supporting his facade of holiness by giving the knight precisely the advice he needs?), Archimago directs him away from plural adventures and toward the "straunge man . . . That wasteth all this countrey far and neare" (31.3-4), the goal of his assigned "great adventure." But despite correct advice, despite the presence of Una, despite his defeat of Errour, Redcrosse seems condemned to err. The problem, I propose, is that the knight inhabits a new kind of narrative designed to dramatize the post-Reformation challenges of living without the comforting certainties of priestly authority. Beneath Ariosto's irony there remains a coherent universe ordered by stable categories that facilitate moral judgment, at least a good part of the time. The pervasiveness of the Hercules *in bivio* theme in *Orlando furioso* confirms that alternatives can be defined and prudent choices can be made. The central forest scenes on which the Errour episode is modelled occur within story lines ordered by a familiar causality; they are scenes of anagnorisis and peripety in a comprehensible tragicomic plot. Hercules is no less prominent in the *Faerie Queene*, but the *bivium* is conspicuously absent, for an emblem of prudential

choice between seductive evil and a good requiring repression for eventual reward is far too logical to describe the dilemmas confronting the new Protestant hero. In retrospect, we see that the straight way out of Error's wood was not really the true way, but the multitude's proverbial erring "broad high way that led, / All bare through people's feet, which thither traveled" (iv.2.8-9) to the House of Pride. The ostensibly "forward" (28.7) motion resumed on returning to the plain, therefore, remained in fact the "backward" (28.2) motion of the knight's departure. Redcrosse has entered a world of apparently hopeless directional paradox best described by Despair himself: "For he, that once hath missed the right way, / The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray (ix.43.8-9).

Spenser sustains the fall of the patron of "wholeness" into perplexing multiplicity by making the relation of both part to part and part to whole a problem requiring "endlesse worke."⁸ Pushing Ariosto's method of disposition to a new extreme, he overlays his epic to an unprecedented degree with romance chronotopic effects. Diachronic principles of progress and causality remain at work in the narrative, but they are systematically countered and confused by the synchronic operation of establishing similarities and differences between scenes linked extensively by repetition. The Error episode, predictably, launches us efficiently into these narrative cross-currents. By locating the episode at the poem's beginning rather than imitating Ariosto's use of similar scenes as central turning-points and by undercutting the sense of causality that might explain the characters' progress into the subsequent episodes, Spenser is creating a radically new kind of narrative organization. The Error episode serves as the first step in the hero's progress toward Eden, but it does so ironically, since it actually leads him in the other direction. It also serves as a type of the scenes to follow, which are connected to it and to one another by a figural principle of narrative succession coexisting with but often eclipsing causal-progressive succession.

Our ability to read this new kind of narrative is challenged and exercised as the knight and lady proceed from the wandering wood into a setting at once very similar and dissimilar, where they encounter another familiar instrument of romance intrusion into Renaissance epic: the magician. Spenser revises tradition by demystifying the magician's mysteries, using the epic device of crossing cosmic planes to expose ludicrously complex machinery of sprites and infernal powers. This adherence to a burlesquely rationalized causality characterizes the entire episode, as the wily deceiver first instills confidence in his victims, carrying his pretext of piety, as we have seen, even to the point of sagely diagnosing Redcrosse's condition and offering a genuine remedy, then moving the victims into place, activating the machinery, and assaulting the knight with a

⁸ I am appropriating Goldberg's appropriation of this Spenserian phrase for the title of his book on the *Faerie Queene*. Although I am here approaching the poem from a different direction, I believe that Goldberg's description of the reader's endless rewriting is compatible with my own.

series of increasingly effective deceptions until his plans are accomplished. If, encouraged by the episode's atmosphere of cause and effect, we look back seeking to understand why, even after defeating Errour, the knight remains susceptible to error, grounds can be discovered for linking the two episodes causally. Perhaps the pride of victory makes him overconfident in his own judgment, moral superiority, and self-sufficiency. But such diachronic connections remain more tenuous than the connections available through synchronic figural analysis. Most obviously, comparison suggests that Redcrosse, as he will continue to do, reenacts his earlier experience by again battling error, although this time he loses. To succeed, he again needs but to follow Una's advice to "add faith unto your force" (i.19.3), faith in his companion this time, who is nothing less than Truth and Fidelity itself. The pair has again entered a setting cut off from heaven's light, as the false Una implies when she blames her lust on "the hidden cruell fate / And mightie causes wrought in heaven above" (51.2-3). Noticing that the false Una suspiciously reverses direction from the earlier blocking of descending rays, we might expect that similar reversals will again undermine the knight's judgment, despite the episode's elaborate causality. Such proves to be the case when the false Una blatantly revises her history:

Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
 My father's kindome, There she stopt with teares;
 Her swollen hart her speech seemed to bereave,
 And then again begun, My weaker years
 Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
 Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde.
 (52.1-6)

"In effect," A. C. Hamilton notes here in his edition of the *Faerie Queene*, "she inverts his role as dragon killer and identifies him with the dragon" (43). Consistent with her new identity as a romance heroine afflicted with courtly love-sickness, she is also attempting to recast the epic "great adventure" as a typical romance scenario by implying that Redcrosse is the reason for motion away from the center whose power he would oppose and disrupt, and by invoking the unresolved conflict of familial and erotic allegiances that constitutes one of romance's defining features. Unfortunately, the situation is also so dissimilar to the combat with Errour that Una's advice can no longer be applied. Left with only force to apply (and from this he is restrained by Archimago), Redcrosse reverts to the dwarf's earlier advice (cf. i.13.8-9) and flees from the scene of error.

The pattern continues as the legend proceeds. The Apollonian "son of day" (v. 25) encounters a series of characters related one to another primarily through their familial ties to and associations with Night and the underworld. Running counter to this emphatic opposition is Spenser's careful blurring of the

distinction between the knight and his foes, a technique found by a number of critics to be a distinctive feature of this legend's combats. Individually and in combination, episode after episode leads us into an epistemological impasse and warns us against presuming that our categories are adequate to the job of making crucial distinctions. A nadir is finally reached at the cave of despair. There Una rescues her knight through the simple expedient of reminding him that he is one of the elect: "Why should's't thou then despair, that chosen art?" (53.5). Unlike Ariosto's heroes, who return to a familiar epic world after their encounters in the middle of the forest, Redcrosse now learns that he must in effect create his own generic alternative to the infernally repetitive world through which he has progressed without truly progressing. During his stay at the House of Holiness he receives ministrations from a host of moral agents. Among these it is Charissa who is given special prominence. Fidelity and Speranza, like faith and hope in the preceding cantos, help the knight to regain his perfect *integritas*, but after their cure he quickly lapses into an unheroic contempt of the world, and even reverts to despair:

The faithfull knight now grew in litle space,
By hearing her, and by her sisters lore,
To such perfection of all heavenly grace,
That wretched world he gan for to abhor,
And mortall life gan loath, as thing forlore,
Greev'd with remembrance of his wicked wayes,
And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,
That he desirde to end his wretched dayes:
So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soul dismayes.
(21)

Mediating between harsh Penance and the gentler guidance of Mercy, Charity, it seems, is Spenser's solution to the Protestant dilemma of good works, and to the Protestant epic poet's challenge of reconciling undirected duties with the generic convention of directed *labor*. The whole process culminates in a definition of the holy and heroic life that echoes the earlier cure, but with an important difference:

Shortly therin so perfect he became,
That from the first unto the last degree,
His mortal life he learned had to frame
In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame.
(45.6-9)

Hamilton notes that here "for the first and only time the Knight is linked directly with the virtue of Holiness, which is not an inner moral state but an active virtue displayed in acts of charity" (138). This passage, together with its negative type

in Despair's urging Redcrosse not to draw his days "forth to their last degree," also stands as the first and only time Spenser applies temporal modifiers to "degree," a term he elsewhere reserves for vertical classification. Wording this crucial definition with careful attention to chronotopic implications, he fuses temporal and spatial distinctions to express the type of exemplary life that can replace the regressive progress of romance and the earned salvational progress of Catholic epic. Charity allows the knight to "frame" — a term Spenser employs throughout the *Faerie Queene* to designate the architectonics of literal and figurative constructions — his mortal life in the sense that his invulnerable *integritas* is once again "perfect"; in the sense that the full hierarchical range of his activities, from large to small and from high to low, is beyond reproach; and in the sense that each step along his life's pilgrimage, from first unto the last (and, of course, from earthly life below to heavenly life above), is "in" holy righteousness and "without," or beyond, the reaches of sin, which would taint his exemplary status. By adding Faith Redcrosse achieved the victories he has achieved so far; by adding Hope he returned to the true path; by adding Charity he can sustain the cure effected by Faith and Hope and frame for himself an epic itinerary of heroic action that is no less exemplary and no less consistently motivated than that of his predecessors.

The hero who proceeds from the House of Holiness to achieve earthly glory and, at the same time, to cooperate with the Providential plan, appears to have returned to the best of all possible epic worlds. The elaborate generic trappings of the combat with the dragon — invocation, similes, allusions linking classical epic to the Christian apocalypse, the defense of the Edenic omphalos, the apparent founding of a new dynastic line — reward the saint for and correspond to the inner achievement realized at the House of Holiness. And then suddenly, like the return of the repressed, paradox intrudes upon this splendid harmony. While he is rewriting Homer's plot to allow the hero to marry the utopian king's daughter, Spenser also gives Redcrosse the occasion to speak to his hosts "of straunge adventures, and of perils sad, / Which in his travell him befallen had" (xii.15.4-5). The hero, the narrator informs us, "discourst his voyage long," proceeding with epic diligence "from point to point" (15.8-9), and the Emperor of Eden duly replies with sympathy for "the great evils, which ye bore / From first to last in your late enterprise" (17.2-3). But as Jacqueline Miller points out, after Archimago suddenly appears with a letter claiming the knight is betrothed to Duessa, it is revealed that Redcrosse, strangely, neglects to mention his encounters with Fidessa/Duessa during his allegedly "point to point" account. It appears that his ability to frame his epic itinerary "from the first unto the last degree" is accompanied by a tendency to suppress those events of the past that do not lie neatly upon this newly and retrospectively constructed true path. If it were not unsettling enough to witness the patron of wholeness practicing half-truth, substituting the part for the whole in the manner of Archimago, Duessa, and Despair, Redcrosse immediately follows his account with the surprising

announcement that he must rush off to six years' service against the Paynim king. Even after its apparent reduction of romance to its own ends, epic, we now find, imitates its generic double by ending with its conflict of allegiances unresolved. Reaffirming the lessons that our recent vision of Edenic harmony might have allowed us to forget, the paradoxical ending of the *Legend of Holiness* sends us into the remaining books with a better understanding both of the need to grip the whole discourse as in a handful and of the difficulties and dangers this process entails. Or to put the matter allegorically, Wholeness has been betrothed to Truth, but it will be some time before the marriage is consummated, and we remain, with our attention heightened by anticipation, in the expectant yet anxious period in between.

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Ariosto Moralisé: Political Decorum in Spenser's Imitations of *Orlando furioso*¹

A familiar anecdote records Elizabeth's response to the circulation at court of her godson's translation of the twenty-eighth canto of *Orlando furioso*. The queen allegedly "punished" John Harington with the task of Englishing the remaining forty-five cantos of the Italian bestseller. Her reaction indicates something of the reception that a poem like Ariosto's popular romance might encounter in the highest places during the final phase of the Tudor dynasty. Despite the poem's evident impropriety, this ribald excerpt seems to have produced an appetite for more of the *Furioso* in the ultimate arbiter of taste at the late Tudor court (McNulty xxiv-xxv). Elizabeth's unwillingness to protest too much may also enact the "quick vivacity of spirit" and "pleasing affability" commended to court ladies in Castiglione's manual of conduct, if they are confronted with "talk that is a little too loose" (*The Book of the Courtier* 207).² In *The Scholemaster*, however, Roger Ascham's more direct assault upon the trifling of Arthurian romance and the socio-religious outrage of an Englishman Italianate suggests more explicitly the sort of resistance that a poem like Ariosto's might face in England, especially if it were undertaken by a less intimate associate of the inner circle at court than John Harington (Ascham 106).³

Therefore, Spenser's recurrent imitations of *Orlando furioso* in *The Faerie Queene* inevitably involve anxieties besides those of merely literary influence. This aspiring author's effort to introduce himself into the line of a "strong poet" like his chief Italian precursor undoubtedly entails such concerns, if we adopt

¹ The opening portion of this essay expands and revises my "Romancing Eliza: The Political Decorum of Ariostan Imitation in *The Faerie Queene*" (*Renaissance Papers* 1993).

² The phrases thus rendered appear as follows in the Italian text: "una pronta vivacità d'ingegno; una certa affabilità piacevole; i ragionamenti ancor un poco lascivi" (*Il libro del cortegiano* 303).

³ Coming, as it does, from a period earlier in the Tudor era than do the texts of Harington and Spenser central to this essay, *The Scholemaster* is potentially anachronistic. However, Ascham's linkage of romance and national character is apposite, as is his role as the young Elizabeth's tutor. Further, such opinions as those he espoused about Italy abound in the final decades of her reign. Texts like Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* or Gaveston's speech in Marlowe's *Edward II*, 1.1.50-70, readily attest to such attitudes, as does York's denunciation of "Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound / The open ear of youth doth always listen, / Report of fashion in proud Italy, / Whose manner still our tardy-apish nation / Limpes after in base imitation" (*Richard II*, 2.1.19-23). York's outcry is anachronistic in relation to the period of Richard II's rule but represents anti-Italian feeling typical of the Elizabethan nineties.

Harold Bloom's psychoanalytic perspective on relations between ambitious young poets and their well established predecessors. But when Spenser announces that "[f]ierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize [his] song" (1.pr.1.9), he sounds a note whose echo suggests more than his emulous desire to "overgo Ariosto," as Gabriel Harvey describes his friend's ambition in their published correspondence (628);⁴ for Spenser's choice of this particular exemplar occasions more than a transaction between individual poets. Its ramifications include the refashioning of an Italian model for an English audience whose most decisive member was the queen herself and whose sense of collective identity was routinely asserted via its differences from Rome in religion and from Italy in general, despite myriad cultural debts that England undeniably owed to that alien nation.

Spenser's figure of Britomart, with her obvious origins in Ariosto's Bradamante and her clear relation to Elizabeth, most directly reflects the English poem's relation to its dominant Italian pre-text in the politically sensitive project of representing the queen; but the figure of Belpheobe, who is also depicted via patent reprises from the Ariostan model and explicitly associated with Elizabeth in Spenser's Letter to Raleigh, entails a kindred assimilation of alien origins to the ends of English poetry and thus also tests Spenser's skill as a mediator in that delicate exchange between cultures. Delicacy, moreover, is a quality upon which Ariostan wit in particular can put immense strains for an English poet addressing his queen, as the canto from the *Furioso* that supposedly caused Elizabeth to exact her ironic punishment from John Harington readily attests. Unrestrained ribaldry at the expense of women forms the substance of the episode of Astolfo and Giocondo recounted therein; for this tale represents women as creatures whose sex drive is boundless and who, in consequence, are predictably unfaithful. The Italian poet begs off in the proem to this canto by attributing the presence of such a misogynous episode in his poem entirely to Turpin, the Archbishop of Rheims, who regularly functions as the standard of authenticity for events in the story that Ariosto strategically admits, in such instances, he is retelling from a source.⁵ "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" thus become authoritatively twice-told tales in a comic routine that

⁴ All Spenser quotations are taken from the Penguin edition of *The Faerie Queene*. Of course, Spenser is echoing the familiar opening line of Ariosto's masterwork: *Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori* . . .

⁵ "Lasciate questo canto, che senza esso / può star l'istoria, e non sarà men chiara./ Mettendolo Turpino, anch'io l'ho messo,/ non per malivolenza né per gara" (28.2.1-4; "Skip this canto, since the story can stand without it and will be no less clear. Since Turpin included it, so have I, but not in malevolence or taunting"). Legend has it that Turpin accompanied Charlemagne in his march on Spain and died at Roncevaux. *A Life of Charlemagne* is ascribed to him, and Ariosto attributes preposterous occurrences to the authority of this witness on numerous occasions. In doing so, he follows Boiardo, whose point of departure for *Orlando innamorato* is Turpin's "true chronicle." For a useful discussion of this feature of Ariosto's poem, see Zatti 173-212.

recurs throughout the *Furioso* on extravagant occasions when the narrative becomes comically preposterous.⁶

Given the contents of Ariosto's tale of Astolfo and Giocondo, perhaps it is surprising that Spenser alludes to it at all; but inhibitions in this regard are uncharacteristic of the Elizabethan poet, especially in the "Legend of Chastity." Hellenore's experience among the satyrs, for example, reveals no squeamishness in affairs orgiastic enough to scandalize prudes; and the Squire of Dames' unsuccessful quest for ladies who would "abide for ever chaste and sound" (3.7.56.7) reprises in brief the canto of Ariosto's that supposedly shocked the queen into requiring Harington's translation to come into being. Despite its shorter form, Spenser's English remake of the Italian model communicates the same message about women, although it disparages the whole sex with more courtly discretion than Ariosto's version displays. Spenser never indulges, here or elsewhere, in Ariosto's habitual jest about Turpin and the poet's consequent obligation to relate patently ridiculous accounts of unbelievable events and behavior; but he does show a decorous restraint in the language that he employs, and his toning down of the ribaldry in this source typifies Spenser's modification of Ariostan originals. The Italian poet's strategic attribution both of his story to Turpin and of its inclusion in the *Furioso* to scrupulosity over historical truth compounds with the scabrous joke on women and thus slyly enhances it. But Spenser gallantly fends off the attack on their sex contained in this tale by a direct (though belated) critique of its teller and by the indirection of allegory as well. The bawdy tale initially receives the sanction of wry commiseration from its auditor, Satyrane, via the Spenserian equivalent of what moviemakers nowadays call a "reaction shot":

Perdy, (said Satyrane) thou Squire of Dames,
Great labour fondly hast thou hent in hand,
To get small thanks, and therewith many blames,
That may emongst Alcides labours stand.
(3.7.61.1-4)

However, when the narrator abandons Florimell to return to Satyrane and resume this strand of his story, he makes a point of censuring the teller of this scabrous tale and thus demonstrates his own unwillingness to connive with the Squire's sense of humor:

It yrkes me, leave thee in this wofull state,
To tell of Satyrane, where I him left of late.
Who having ended with that Squire of Dames
A long discourse of his adventures vaine,

⁶ I borrow Milton's rendition in *Paradise Lost* 1.16 of Ariosto's bold claim in *Orlando furioso* 1.2.2: "cosa non detta in prosa mai né in rima."

The which himselfe, then Ladies more defames. . . .
(3.8.43-44)

Further, this figure has ended up in the clutches of that voracious monster of sexual appetite, Argante, whom only a virtual clone of the Belpheobe/Britomart type, Palladine, can ultimately overcome. An allegorical reading of the Squire's fortunes in his sexual quest thus reveals his moral degeneracy, and by sounding like a grammatical feminization of the common synonym for knight errant, "paladin," his savior's name itself amounts to a pun suggesting the sort of martial maidenhood that Britomart epitomizes.

Social tact of this sort and comparable strategies of ingratiation distinguish key instances of Spenser's imitations of Ariosto that entail a figure associated with Queen Elizabeth like Britomart or Belpheobe; and the issues at stake in such reprises become clearer when one takes into account both the literary origins and the political destinations of these passages. The pervasive irreverence of Ariostan romance becomes potentially even more volatile when compounded with the prospect of a readership at a court with no less of a woman on top than Queen Elizabeth.⁷ Thus, Paul Alpers's discussion of Britomart as a comic figure (393-97) makes more sense when considered in tandem with the issue of female authority that Maureen Quilligan identifies as a primary condition in Spenser's initial presentation of Belpheobe. Comedy comes into play for both critics, as does an inevitable consciousness of Elizabeth as a designated reader and allegorical subject of *The Faerie Queene*; but for Quilligan the comedy derives from that consciousness of the queen and amounts to a male way of accommodating discomfort with female authority. Her inference rings true, but combining these perspectives with an appreciation of the Ariostan pre-texts so often in the background at such junctures provides a fresh sense of the political and artistic pressures that commonly bear upon Spenser's imitations of his chief Italian exemplar; for these models place additional strains upon poetic practice at the point of origin, when an awareness of their intended audience is perceived as a condition of their imitation from the start.

The proem to Book III turns into a hymn of praise to Elizabeth more promptly than all other such exordia in the poem because it concerns a virtue most readily, indeed most necessarily, associated with the Virgin Queen. Although Spenser will subsequently distinguish chastity from virginity in a way that can be construed as a criticism of his sovereign, such inferences require explanatory initiatives that are as likely to betray the "gealous opinion" of the interpreter as the hidden agenda of the poet; and the alacrity of the poet's paean to the queen in this proem effectively preempts suspicions of this sort, at least at the outset of this book. Spenser's "Legend of Chastity" may ultimately expose Elizabeth's failure to create an heir by her lack of energy and resolve in the very

⁷ I borrow (and slightly alter) Davis's title for her fifth chapter, "Women on Top" (124).

quest that motivates the exemplary Britomart, but such "subversive" messages only become clear upon reflection and analysis as the narrative proceeds. Spenser knows very well how to get past the gate at a party whose hostess he may quietly disparage once within doors. Arguably such social skills amount to the essence of the kind of courtliness that he learned to practice in the advancement of his own career.

The first canto of *Faerie Queene* III opens with a broad gesture toward Ariosto by relating an encounter between Britomart and the two champions of the previous book, Arthur and Guyon, which is modeled upon an episode at the conclusion of the first canto in *Orlando furioso*. The English poet displaces and recombines elements from Ariosto's initial canto in a way that demonstrates Spenser's courtly decorum while still signaling clearly the source that he has assimilated and reproduced in very much his own fashion. The most resonantly Ariostan chord that Spenser sounds — "O goodly usage of those antique times" (3.1.13.1) — echoes a prominent line from the *Furioso*'s first encounter in an obvious effort to associate the episode under way with its Italian original. However, Spenser reins in the raucous humor of two opponents who suspend their differences of religion and race to cut a deal that facilitates their hot pursuit of a desirable princess, as occurs in the case of Rinaldo and Ferraù in *Furioso* 1. Arthur and Guyon do contrast humorously with Timias and Britomart, when the two male knights promptly chase after Florimell and thus abandon both the squire, who pursues "the foule Foster," and "the martial maid," who continues to follow her original course. But Ariosto's famous line — "O gran bontà de' cavalieri antiqui!" (1.22.1) — caps a crescendo of anti-chivalric satire with transparent irony, whereas Spenser invokes that resonant verse in generally convincing tribute to mutual restraint between knightly rivals before he proceeds to a diminuendo of ironies and the subsequent event of the chase.

Furthermore, Spenser moderates the slapstick at the end of Ariosto's initial canto. The awkward pratfall that determines the victor in the joust between Sacripante and Bradamante serves as the model for the encounter between Guyon and Britomart, but Spenser notably tones down the comic element in the process of imitation. Bradamante, unlike Britomart, carries no magic lance at this stage in her story, but she manages to overcome her challenger in a head-on collision of their horses. Given the allegory of sexual appetite associated with horsemanship throughout the *Furioso*, Bradamante thus gains something of a pyrrhic victory for the moral order in such a messy encounter with the would-be rapist of Angelica. The summary unhorsing of the knight of Temperance by the exemplar of Chastity in Spenser's poem makes the comparative value of these virtues less problematic than the incident in Ariosto upon which Britomart's prompt conquest of Guyon is based. The priority given to Bradamante's pursuit of her beloved Ruggiero will soon be both acknowledged by her choice to neglect her recall to duty at Marseilles and then sanctioned by Melissa's prophecy in Merlin's cave; however, when she is thus brought low in a joust

gone awry, the dignity of her chivalric heroism does not emerge untarnished despite her apparent "triumph" in this misadventure. Sacripante is the undeniable loser, and the arriving messenger makes matters painfully worse for him by revealing that his victorious rival is a woman. In Guyon's unhorsing the Palmer divines this embarrassing fact, but he keeps it to himself so that it does not emerge as a public humiliation. Both the Palmer's persuasive intervention and face-saving white lies from Arthur serve to rationalize Guyon's defeat in a cover-up that entirely glosses over the most shameful aspect of this paladin's loss. What Ariosto's text trumpets aloud to all, Spenser reserves for a parenthetical aside that leaves the butt of this joke unapprised of the palpable hit at his dignity and thereby spares Guyon the open dishonor of public embarrassment. Moreover, gallant consideration for Guyon's feelings prompts the excuses that Arthur invents on behalf of his companion, whereas Angelica concocts similar rationalizations simply to persist in manipulating Sacripante for her own selfish purposes. An Elizabethan courtier's sober sense of decorum pervades Spenser's re-presentation of Ariosto's broad jest and thus restrains the spirit of irreverence characteristic of the Italian original in its opening gambits.

Courtiers, of course, come in many varieties, and we should not confuse Brand X with the top of the line or any other of the degrees in this kind. It would be hard to imagine the Earl of Essex, for example, fussing over such nuances of reception as concern Spenser in addressing his poem to the queen. Sir John Harington, as his aristocratic title suggests and his status as Elizabeth's godson further indicates, could readily assume a more cordial welcome at the queen's court than a talented outsider like Spenser could reasonably expect. Such a predisposition in his royal reader gave Harington the leeway for mischievous play that he exploited in his fabled prank of circulating the *Furioso's* bawdiest canto as an initial sampler of what was to come. Comparing both his version of the Italian original and his commentary on it with Spenser's imitation of the same source material suggests the social complacency with which Harington undertook literary chores akin to reprises of Ariosto that Spenser wrought in notably more guarded ways. For example, in defending the moral efficacy of *Orlando furioso*, Harington even ascribes that potential to the story of Astolfo and Giocondo. In the preface to his translation, after a perfunctory show of distaste in this regard, he asserts that "even that lewd tale may bring some men profit," and adds that he has "heard that it is already (and perhaps not unfitly) termed the comfort of cuckolds" (McNulty 11-12). He returns to this line of thought in his commentary on the canto itself, where he alludes to the cuckold's affliction as "the blow that never smarteth as some have termed it" (McNulty 323) and thus indicates the pleasure he takes in this kind of fun. In Harington's "setting forth" of the *Furioso*⁸ we can merrily enjoy this scabrous episode at

⁸ I use the quoted phrase to refer to both Harington's translation and the apparatus that accompanies it in the original edition. See Cauchi.

the expense of women and acquire needed solace in the process, whereas the narrator of *The Faerie Queene* pointedly rejects such connivance with the teller of Spenser's version of this tale. Thus, in contexts where Ariostan ribaldry and irreverence are media of exchange among Harington, Spenser, and Elizabeth I, the pressures of gender and status become increasingly apparent as they bear upon *The Faerie Queene*. In such transactions each of these participants has a potential role to play in enhancing our understanding of Spenser's poem, and the determinants of their respective social positions influence the nature of the originally Ariostan text that emerges in Spenser's imitations of *Orlando furioso*.

Reading Spenser's imitations of Ariosto in the context of their likely reception at Elizabeth's court should not limit these reprises to the exclusive confines of a few perspectives upon them; gender and power, however, are undeniably influential conditions of Spenserian composition that deserve due consideration, if not single-minded attention. The female monarch as "target audience" (to borrow a phrase from the lingo of admen) can help explain how the volatile irreverence of Ariostan pre-texts becomes acceptable subject matter for "our sage and serious poet" (Milton 728), once decorous adjustments have accommodated potentially subversive models to their new setting. Such an adaptation from another unlikely source underlies the central myth of Spenser's poem, and his accommodation of this peculiar pre-text for courtly compliment exemplifies analogous aspects of Ariostan imitation in *The Faerie Queene*.

I refer to Spenser's use of "The Tale of Sir Thopas" from *The Canterbury Tales* to represent Arthur's dream when he explains to Una what has brought him to Fairyland in the first place (1.9.6-15). "Sir Thopas" is Chaucer the pilgrim's own initial contribution to the tale-swapping among fellow travellers; and his offering is so insufferably boring that it elicits this blunt dismissal from Harry Baillie, the host of the Tabard Inn, who presides over the exchange of stories:

"By God," quod he, "for pleynly, at a word,
Thy drasty rymyng is not worth a toord!"
(vv. 929-30)

Derek Pearsall writes of this tale with telling wit when he remarks, "It has been said that an appreciation of Milton is one of the rewards of a classical education, and it can be said of *Thopas* that it would be worth reading all the popular Middle English romances for no other reason than to savour the more its delicious absurdity" (161-62). Yet Spenser employs this parodic dream vision of an "elf-queene" (v. 788) by an utterly implausible knight to clarify what motivates his pattern of all the virtues, Arthur, in his quest for Gloriana, "that true glorious type" of Elizabeth herself. The peculiarity of this choice of models corresponds to the palpable oddness that frequently haunts Ariostan reprises in their Spenserian settings.

The mid-sixteenth century canonization of *Orlando furioso* as an edifying classic may account for some of the readiness with which it could be assimilated to the high purposes of Spenser's didactic allegory, but "Sir Thopas" had no such legacy of moral exemplarity attached to it.⁹ Quite the contrary; if we recall Wyatt's denunciation (vv. 50-51) of courtiers who

Praise Sir Thopas for a noble tale
And scorn the story that the knight told,

we can fairly appreciate the common Tudor estimate of Spenser's chosen model for Arthur's dream vision. Further, if we recall Shakespeare's burlesque of this oneiric encounter with the fairy queen in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we can understand the vulnerability to parody of this sort of romantic transport, especially when it is premised upon such shaky grounds that its untenable claims upon our serious regard are already fully apparent. Finally, by comparing this shared motif in these two works of the Elizabethan nineties, we can also witness the political decorum that representations of the queen then required in venues as diverse as Shakespearean drama and Spenserian epic romance.

Both the desire that sets Thopas upon his quest and the frustrating interruption of its attainment in the original dream vision bear noteworthy similarities to the motives and experiences of Ariosto's knights, whose vain pursuits of the elusive Angelica consume much of their energy in the opening cantos of *Orlando furioso*.¹⁰ But Shakespeare assigns a comparable dream and its apparent realization in the flesh (and fur) to the "rude mechanical," Bottom; and he thus recovers something of the comedy that characterizes both the Chaucerian version of this experience and its Ariostan analogues. Moreover, he plays the dangerous game of placing a conventional figure for his sovereign, the fairy queen, at the center of this farcical consummation of transgressive desire; yet he launches thereby a stinging satire *not* on the cult of Elizabeth, which he carefully protects from this attack, but on the most prominent poet among the cultists, Edmund Spenser.¹¹ Though Shakespeare represents Bottom the weaver spending a midsummer's night with the fairy queen, the madcap context of their tryst diminishes its potential offensiveness. On such a night, in such a play, anything goes, it seems. Bottom can have Arthur's dream without the residue of longing, without "that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night / Whilome doth rangle in [his] riven breast" (*Faerie Queene* 1.9.7.4-5); and Shakespeare can safely have his farcical way with Spenser's stately personage. Within the bounds of certain kinds of literary works, the outrageous becomes laughable especially

⁹ Javitch documents this process in telling detail. His chapter on Harington (134-57) is especially relevant to the English reception of *Orlando furioso*.

¹⁰ See Anderson and Silverman for apposite discussions of Spenserian humor in relation to Chaucer and Ariosto. Goldberg also reflects upon the "Sir Thopas" connection (18-20).

¹¹ See Bednarz for a thorough discussion of Shakespearean parody of Spenser in this comedy.

by means of the deft distinction Shakespeare makes between his fairy queen, Titania, and a figure of Elizabeth notably immune to Cupid's arrow:

A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by [the] west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free.
(2.1.157-64)

Shakespeare's self-protective strategy in sending up Spenser but not Elizabeth runs parallel to the decorous redistribution of elements in the Ariostan pre-texts, whose restrained imitation constitutes the opening of "The Legend of Britomartis. Or of Chastity." Spenser merges elements from the beginning and end of *Orlando furioso*'s first canto that enable him to celebrate both chivalry and a figural ancestor of the queen, Britomart; but he suppresses a more sinister feature of his source in this reprise. Sacripante's lustful designs upon Angelica are displaced to another context and refigured in an altogether lower type, Braggadochio; and this transformation of his pre-text further enables Spenser to observe decorum in both the social and literary senses of that term.¹² Whereas Angelica's calculated mollification of Sacripante is reprised in the excuses that Arthur tactfully fabricates for the fallen Guyon, Spenser dissociates the sexual aggression of Ariosto's king of Circassia from all of his aristocratic figures and transfers it to one of patently comic baseness, Braggadochio. Thus, the ambition to ravish an explicit type of the queen — "shadowed" here as "a most vertuous and beautifull Lady," Belpheobe — becomes instantaneously recognizable as the vice of a transparent imposter from the lower orders. The "griesly Foster" chases Florimell, but the would-be courtier who is obviously unqualified to realize his desires becomes the venue for lust of the kind Sacripante was contemplating in the company of Angelica when Bradamante foiled his plans.

In her next appearance Belpheobe is not exempt from another desiring gaze that comes, in this case, from a more deserving type, Timias, the honorable squire of Arthur. When Spenser resumes the tale of Florimell's prompt defender in 3.5, he manages both to illustrate the problems inherent in beholding such a prepossessing figure as this "shadow" of the queen and dutifully to expound upon the proprieties in jeopardy during a transaction of this sort. Yet his revision of

¹² The political allegory in this episode has frequently been noted. The relevant commentary in the *Variorum Edition* (206ff.) begins with Upton's remark, "Methinks when I see Braggadochio and his buffoon servant Trompart repulsed by Belpheobe, I cannot help thinking them proper types of the Duke of Anjou and of Simier." For a recent consideration of this phenomenon, see Quint.

another Ariostan model on this occasion again shows the strain entailed in the decorous modification of an unruly original whose frequent irreverence can create friction in the process of tactful refashioning especially necessary in contexts that make reference to the queen. Indeed Spenser's authorial intervention at this juncture on the topic of virginity pays courtly compliment to this precious quality at such elaborate length that one senses the potential for comedy exploited in the first episode with Braggadochio lurking in the background of this awestruck tribute to the very sort of rose that Sacripante schemed unsuccessfully to pluck. Further, if one recalls Ariosto's skeptical speculations about Angelica's virgin rose when she asserts its intactness to the doubtful Sacripante, the contrast in tone could not be more complete.

One of the profound jokes central to the plot of *Orlando furioso* depends upon what strikes the poem's eponymous hero, Orlando, as the appalling unworthiness of Medoro, the guy who gets the girl whom the great knights routinely go awol to pursue; and this infantryman is the figure who stands behind Timias in the model that Spenser imitates in the initial encounter between the squire and Belpheobe. Medoro's very name encodes a pun upon the Aristotelian ideal of *aurea mediocritas*, the Golden Mean, and Ariosto singles out this mere footsoldier for the prize that remains maddeningly unattainable to a host of aristocratic aspirants. Like Medoro, Timias is prompt and daring in the execution of what he perceives as his duty; and his name, which derives from the Greek word for honor (*timê*), also signifies pointedly a salient element of his role in the poem as an attendant upon Arthur, that perfect compound of all the virtues. But Spenser, while fully reproducing in his reprise Ariosto's Petrarchism through metaphors of lovesickness and the wounds of passion, situates them in the squire, who is thus twice smitten -- by the foresters, whom he ultimately overcomes, and by Belpheobe, with whom he has no chance of winning. Spenser thus totally suppresses the comedy of class difference central to the Ariostan episode in which a princess' sudden and irreversible crush on a commoner succeeds in driving the noblest of her suitors 'round the bend. Further, Spenser virtually marks this suppression with an encomium that in part sounds almost like a homily, for both praise and admonition are joined to celebrate Belpheobe's truly remarkable "rose" and to declare her an example for "[f]aire ympes of beautie" to heed. The poet's neoplatonic idealization transforms Timias' inappropriate desire into a fit understanding of the object that he misapprehends and thus provides a correct alternative to both his mistaken gaze and that of Braggadochio. But only in the clear case of the latter's unambiguously degraded nature could Spenser comfortably recapture something of the comic spirit of his Italian original.

It is not easy to generalize persuasively about Spenser's imitations of *Orlando furioso* because contrary undercurrents and elusive tensions between the model and its reprise often confound our desire for a secure sense of the English poet's intentions. It is necessary to review such passages individually and to

appreciate their redistribution of elements from a variety of Ariostan sources that often undergo radical changes due to the Spenserian contexts in which they appear. No episode from *The Faerie Queene* more readily invites commentary from the critic with an interest in how issues of gender and power influence its author than the liberation of Artegall from servile captivity in Radigone at the hands of amazonian warriors. It too contains a significant combination of quite different, if not contradictory, passages from the *Furioso*; and it is easy to overlook the tension between them, which the English poet suppresses.

Spenser's pointed rejection of matriarchy, as it is exemplified by this society, includes a notable exception that saves a place for England's current queen among divinely sanctioned monarchs. After the overthrow of Radigund, Britomart briefly takes charge of the kingdom and sets it right:

. . . she there as Princes rained,
And changing all that forme of common weale,
The liberty of women did repeale,
Which they had long usurpt; and them restoring
To mens subiection, did true Iustice deale.
(5.7.42.3-7)

This reaffirmation of a gendered hierarchy with men on top is routinely read in the context of Spenser's previous *obiter dictum* about the governmental organization of Radigone.

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they have shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heast of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely understand,
That they were borne to base humilitie,
Unlesse the heavens lift them to lawfull soveraintie.
(5.5.25)

The hexameter's gesture of deference for the current arrangement of the Elizabethan polity mirrors Shakespeare's signal exclusion of a figure of the Virgin Queen from contamination by his satire in Bottom's tryst with Titania. Spenser's critique of female rule, like Cupid's arrow, tactfully misses the queen regnant.

But recollection of his source for the revision of the law of Radigone can, once again, skew our sense of the propriety of Spenser's overall endorsement of the patriarchal organization of civil government. Memory of its origins in Ariosto haunts its message in Spenser, just as an awareness that Arthur's dream

derives from Sir Thopas' vision of his "elf-queene" offers an extremely odd angle from which to view its transformation in *The Faerie Queene*. Because the homicidal women of Alessandretta (19.54-20.98) constitute the signal instance of female rule in the *Furioso*, they are routinely, and rightly, taken for the key analogue to the amazonian citizenry of Spenser's Radigone (Bowman). However, in the 1532 additions to his poem, Ariosto introduced three episodes that balance and extend adventures narrated in the previous two editions; and one of these, the tale of Marganorre's tyrannical misogyny in canto 37, corresponds in its thematic preoccupations with issues raised by the Alessandretta episode and comments tellingly upon it. In this context, as in Spenser's Radigone, power relations are determined by legal statute that gives absolute control to members of one sex; and the conquering heroes force a change upon the society that they subdue. However, the law that undergoes not merely revision, but reversal, turns the former kingdom of Marganorre into a matriarchy. Like Britomart, Bradamante and Marfisa use their victory for the purposes of social engineering, but they transform the society they have dominated in precisely the opposite direction of that chosen by Spenser's heroine.

Prima ch'indi si partan le guerriere,
 fan venir gli abitanti a giuramento,
 che daranno i mariti alle mogliere
 de la terra e del tutto il reggimento;
 e castigato con pene severe
 sarà chi contrastare abbia ardimento.
 In somma quel ch'altrove è del marito
 che sia qui de la moglie è statuito.

Poi si feccion promettere ch'a quanti
 mai verrian quivi, non darian ricetta,
 o fosson cavallieri, o fosson fanti,
 ne 'ntrar li lascirian pur sotto un tetto,
 se per Dio non giurassino e per santi,
 o s'altro giuramento v'è più stretto,
 che sarian sempre de le donne amici,
 e dei nimici lor sempre nimici;

e s'avranno in quel tempo, e se saranno,
 tardi o più tosto, mai per aver moglie,
 che sempre a quelle sudditi saranno,
 e ubbidienti a tutte le lor voglie.
 Tornar Marfisa, prima ch'esca l'anno,
 disse, e che perdan gli arbori le foglie;
 e se la legge in uso non trovasse,
 fuoco e ruina il borgo s'aspettasse.
 (37.115-117)

(Before the warrior-damsels left they imposed a pledge on the inhabitants--that the husbands would make over to their wives the administration of the territory and all else. Any man who dared defy this rule would be severely punished. In fact, what elsewhere pertains to the husband was here to fall to the wife./Then they extracted a promise that whoever happened this way, be he knight or page, would be offered no welcome, would be forbidden entry beneath any roof unless he swore by God and the saints (or by any oath more binding) that he would ever be Woman's friend, and enemy to her enemies./ If they already had a wife, or if sooner or later they were to acquire one, they were ever to be subject to her and obedient to her every fancy. Marfisa would be back, she said, before the year was out and the trees had shed their leaves; and if she found the law being flouted, the town could expect fire and destruction.)

(Trans. Waldman)

It is tempting nowadays to contemplate the "subversive" effects of Spenser's echo of this Ariostan passage by making it a "contained" critique of the queen or by giving it a life of its own that undermines Spenser's willful transformation of his pre-text into a reaffirmation of patriarchy with the unique exception of the divinely chosen queen. However, I think it points as well to another quality of Spenser's imitations of *Orlando furioso*: their resistance to comprehensive theories of their overall dynamics and motivation. Spenser certainly entertained emulous ambitions to overgo his Italian precursor, and he certainly wanted to sound a recognizably Ariostan note in his moralization of "fierce warres and faithfull loves." But poetic rivalry and affiliation, like the politics of patronage and gender, are perspectives that illuminate but do not decisively define the many occasions when Spenser has recourse to his chief Italian exemplar. Persuasive accounts of Spenser's growing disenchantment with his celebratory project heighten our alertness to any sign of his disaffection with the regime he served, and this sense of this poet's development especially depends on a keen responsiveness to indications of discontent in the 1596 installment to *The Faerie Queene* (Helgerson 82-89). Thus, it is tempting to read between the lines of Spenser's exemption of Elizabeth in 5.5.25 the routine tokenism of courtly compliment under her rule. The emphatic reinstitution of patriarchy in Radigone (5.7.42) supports that interpretation, particularly when we appreciate how it flies in the face of the alteration of Marganorre's realm into a matriarchy. But the demonstrable complexities of Spenser's imitations of Ariosto, like his avowed desire to avoid "gealous opinions and misconstructions," compel a prudent reader to respect the willful indirectness of his methods as a writer and to question capacious explanations of his motives and meanings in such instances with patient exposition of the particular details of any given passage under review.

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**Liberating the Tomb:
Difference and Death in *Gerusalemme Liberata****

Like much Counter-Reformation writing, Tasso's epic of the Crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem represents and then represses several varieties of threatening difference — religious, sexual, racial, psychological, even textual. In his fundamental study of the *Liberata*, Sergio Zatti (1983) has shown that the struggle of the "uniforme cristiano" to overcome the "multiforme pagano," that is, the heterodox multiplicity of the Islamic "other," can be read as an overt allegory of internal difference and otherness. Zatti identifies several strata of internal "difference" and deviation — the tensions within the Christian camp itself (the "compagni erranti" of Goffredo di Buglione, whom one might be tempted to read as so many protestant schismatics [see Quint 1990 & 1993]); the tensions within individual characters such as Rinaldo and Tancredi, whose errant desires take them beyond the pale of the Christian soldier's duties; the tensions within the poet himself (who identifies himself as a "peregrino errante" in need of Duke Alfonso II d'Este's guidance) and within his poem, with its Armida-like recourse to dangerous "fregi," "diletti," "dolcezze" which compromise and divide the orthodox truth and goodness, not to mention the historical factuality, of the poem's subject matter.

In what follows I will develop Zatti's argument around the most obvious symbolic and narrative foci of the poem: the Holy Sepulchre, and the Crusaders' collective quest to liberate it.¹ In both intra-textual and inter-textual terms, the quest for Christ's empty tomb constitutes the poem's culminating confrontation with the paradigmatic otherness and difference of death. Moreover, the apparently orthodox, devotional, turn to this symbol of a fulfilling life beyond death, a unity beyond multiplicity, conceals as well the yearning for liberation and release of another sort — an annihilation and dispersal capable of freeing Tasso from the vow (*voto*), the pledged word, the pledge of words, that binds him to his ungrateful patron, to the constraints of an orthodox theology, and to a counter-Reform poetics of epic unity.²

* My thanks to John Freccero, David Quint, Walter Stephens, Sergio Zatti, and, especially, Barbara Watts for constructive criticisms of earlier drafts of this essay.

¹ The centrality of this image and this quest have only recently identified as such: see Chiappelli: esp. 171-75, 178-83, 214n20, 227n46; Hampton: 99-100, cf. 113-15.

² Exegesis of the theme of the *voto* in the *Liberata* is also a fairly recent development. In addition to the just cited passages from Chiappelli (plus 222n104 and 227-28nn146-51) and Hampton, see Raimondi: 201-02 and Langer: 43.

The key passage for my argument is the very last stanza of the poem, and particularly its final two lines:

Così vince Goffredo, ed a lui tanto
 avanza ancor de la diurna luce
 ch'a la città già liberata, al santo
 ostel di Cristo i vincitor conduce.
 Né pur deposto il sanguinoso manto
 viene al tempio con gli altri il sommo duce;
 e qui l'arme sospende, e qui devoto
 il gran Sepolcro adora e scioglie il voto.
 (XX.144)³

("Thus Goffredo triumphs; and enough daylight remains for him to conduct the victors through the now liberated city to the holy resting place of Christ. Without even setting aside his bloody mantle, the highest leader comes to the temple with the others; here he hangs up his arms; here, devout, he adores the great Sepulchre and fulfills [or 'is released from'] his vow.")

The adoration of the liberated tomb is the last of a densely packed series of climaxes and plot resolutions carried out over the last three cantos, beginning with Rinaldo's return to the Christian camp, his submission to the authority of Goffredo, and his success in breaking the enchantment of the Wood of Sharon. The walls of the city are then breached by the anti-Babelic siege towers, constructed with the timber taken from the now demon-free forest.⁴ Then comes the death of Argante at the hand of Tancredi, and the taking of Jerusalem itself, all but the tower of David, by the Crusaders. Now the city must be defended by the Crusaders against the massed pagan armies under the general leadership of the renegade Emireno. While the battle goes on outside the city, its usurper-king, Aladino, is killed and the tower taken. The pagan champions Adrasto, Solimano, and Tisaferno are each defeated in turn. The last "champion," Armida, is converted by her erstwhile lover, Rinaldo. Goffredo despatches his counterpart, Emireno. He then proceeds, still bloodied, to the Sepulchre to hang up the "arme pietose," with which he was identified in the first line of the poem, and to fulfill the vow which he had already named in the twenty-third stanza of the first canto as the ultimate goal of the Crusade, in words that are precisely echoed in the final line (I.23.7-8, "né sia chi neghi al peregrin devoto / d'adorar la gran tomba e sciorre il voto"; "nor should anyone prevent the devout pilgrim from adoring the great tomb and fulfilling [being released from] his vow"; cf. I.1.2 and Chiappelli: 214n20).

³ Italian quotations are from the Caretti edition. Translations are my own throughout.

⁴ For a development of this idea, see Quint 1993: 403n72. In a classic and extremely powerful example of Tassian ambivalence, the historical city of Jerusalem stands at once as the typological prefiguration of the city of God and as its own symbolic antithesis, Babel-Babylon, particularly in the final siege when it is defended against the Christians by the "popol misto" of pagandom.

There is reason to think that the liberation and adoration of the Sepulchre, at least as much as the "liberation of Jerusalem," should be taken as *the* central action of the poem in Tasso's own neo-Aristotelian terms (cf. Giamatti: 183).⁵ It is the last event in the protracted sequence of closures; it is specifically identified as the fulfillment of Goffredo's, and the "others," motives in carrying out the crusades (releasing them from the vows by which Pope Urban bound them to the enterprise — see canto XI.23-24); and, finally, as we have just seen, it echoes precisely language which set the poem and its events in motion. We know, in fact, that the title, *Gerusalemme liberata*, was not an authorial choice. The poet had earlier thought to call his poem the *Goffredo* and later he would retitile a revised, "authorized" version as *Gerusalemme conquistata* (Pittoru: 246-251). By contrast, in 1581, when the work was first printed, Torquato Tasso was in the third year of a forced eight year confinement (1579-1586) to the Hospital of Sant'Anna and had no direct part in its publication. As the editor, Angelo Ingegneri, who is responsible for affixing the title we know to the poem, noted accurately in a preface, the locution "Gerusalemme liberata" does have a strong textual basis (Pittoru: 248), deriving from two lines at either end of the poem: in the sixteenth stanza of the first canto, Goffredo describes the Crusader's mission as that of "liberar Gierusalem soggetta" ("liberating subject Jerusalem"); while in the poem's final stanza, as we have seen, Goffredo and company pass through "la città già liberata." They do so, however, while *on their way* to the "santo / ostel di Cristo," namely the "gran Sepolcro" itself. And the first two lines of the poem define Tasso's subject as follows: "Canto l'arme pietose e 'l capitano / che 'l gran sepolcro liberò di Cristo" ("I sing the pious arms and the captain who liberated the great sepulchre of Christ"; emphasis mine). In any case, as we are about to see, the city and the sepulchre converge in symbolic terms, the latter, as it were, unveiling and epitomizing the typological and potentially transcendent meaning of the former.⁶

Entombment, as has often been pointed out, has a fundamental importance in the dynamic of the *Liberata*'s narrative, prominent examples being the miraculous tomb which arises to mark and honor the martyrdom of Svenio in canto VIII.38-40, and the tomb in which Tancredi places the remains of his beloved Clorinda (XII.79, 94-99; cf. XIII.41-43).⁷ As the young hero, Svenio, anticipates the more successful Rinaldo, so his tomb "prefigures in little the

⁵ On Tasso's theoretical commitment to Aristotle's dictum of unity of action, see *Discorsi dell'Arte Poetica*, book II, translated in Rhu 1993: esp. 114-20.

⁶ See Derla: 475, "La struttura spaziale della *Liberata* è ordinata infatti intorno a un centro cosmico (Gerusalemme e il Sepolcro di Cristo: il Centro del Centro)." Stephens 1989: 193 makes the compelling suggestion that the number, 144, of the final stanza has apocalyptic resonance. And see note 8 below.

⁷ See Ferguson's reading of the Clorinda episode (126-30) as well as her treatment of the thematics of the sepulchre in lines 27-32 and 55-60 of the "Canzone al Metauro" (74-77). For related explorations of the thematics of death in the poem, see Fichter: 143-53; Martinelli: 155-58.

'gran sepolcro'" (Hampton: 114). And his martyr's death represents a heroism alternative and, in Tasso's Counter-Reform ideology, superior to that of the heroes of pagan Rome (Hampton: 118). The motif of the sepulchre is, in fact, one of the primary means by which Tasso sets his poem in dialectical relationship, of resemblance and of difference, to the classical, especially Virgilian, epic, whose principal subject is the destruction and foundation of cities (as we will see further along, it also positions him in relation to his vernacular Italian precursors, especially Dante and Ariosto).

This relationship with the *Aeneid* is already in place in the first couplet of the poem (quoted above), where it is also clearly articulated in terms of the tomb. These lines, of course, closely echo the Virgilian "arma virumque cano," but with the studied introduction of a Christianized "pietas" as qualifier on "arme," and the subsumption of the heroic "vir" into the self-sacrificing office of "capitan." The "gran Sepolcro" of line two also, if slightly less obviously, has its Virgilian equivalent. As is by now well known, the Latin verb "condere," which designates the foundation of the Roman city in the opening lines of the *Aeneid* ("tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem" I.33, cf. I.5) also refers to burial (e.g., "animamque sepolcro / condimus" III.67-68, cf. VI.152 [Reckford: 255; Quint 1982: 32]). The word thus bears within itself the fundamental Virgilian paradox of the destruction of one city giving way to the birth of another, along with the recurring linkage between sacrifice and ritual burial of the dead, on the one hand, and on the other, the apotheosis of Rome and its rulers. The implication then is that for Tasso the real meaning of Jerusalem, the typological "visio pacis" and the figure of the City of God on earth, is epitomized by the empty tomb it contains, the promise of eternal life in another world made precisely by the sacrificial descent into the vacancy of death in this one.⁸ Whereas in Virgil burial is the necessary prelude to the founding of the city (illustrated, vividly, for example, in *Aeneid*, books 5 and 6) — for Tasso the Holy Sepulchre is the city of God — while the city of man, as Goffredo points out later in his speech defining the crusaders' mission — is nothing but a tomb (cf. Chiappelli: 172-173; Stephens 1989: 193):

⁸ On Jerusalem as "visio pacis," see, for example, Guibert of Nogent: col.25D-26A; Isidore of Seville: VIII.i.6. For the figurative convergence between the enclosed spaces of the tomb and the *hortus conclusus*, see Chiappelli: 182-84, 229n166. On the typological significance of Tasso's Jerusalem see Giamatti: 183 et passim; Raimondi: 126-28; Fichter: 127, 153; Martinelli: 155; Stephens 1989: 193. For a dissenting view, see Murrin: 126. Tasso, in the *Apologia in difesa de la Gerusalemme liberata*, puts it thus: "perché alcuni di loro [i savi] dicono che Gerusalemme, secondo vari sensi, ora è nome di città, ora figura dell'anima fedele, ora della chiesa militante, ora della trionfante, non sarà stimata vana l'allegoria ch'io ne feci, a la quale posso aggiungere il senso che leva in alto: perché nella visione di Goffredo ed in altri luoghi della celeste Gerusalemme significo la Chiesa trionfante" (485). See also the *Allegoria del poema*, translated in Rhu 1993: esp. 156-57, 160-61.

Non edifica quei che vuol gl'imperi
 su fondamenti fabricar mondani,

 . . . ma ben move ruine, ond'egli oppresso
 sol costruito un sepolcro abbia a se stesso.
 (I.25.1-2, 7-8)

("He who wants to fabricate empires on worldly foundations, does not build, but rather moves ruin — so that, oppressed, he has only built a sepulchre for himself.")

Just so, the closing sequence of the *Liberata* both participates in the classical epic tradition, which invariably terminates in death, and in the Christian overgoing of that tradition. The *Iliad*, of course, culminates with the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor, and above all with the reconciling burial of both when the wrath of Achilles is set aside in pity for the sorrow of Priam. The *Aeneid* ends with the "sacrificial" death of Turnus, which clears the way for the union of the Trojans and Latins and hence for Rome to arise.⁹ Indeed, the entrance of the sword into Turnus's body is described with the word "condit," recalling the poem's opening lines and forecasting a founding burial (XII.950). This ending had been recently closely imitated by Tasso's imposing precursor and *bête noire*, Ariosto, in the *Orlando furioso*,¹⁰ and, as we see shall further along, Tasso in turn echoes Ariosto's echoing of Virgil.

Tasso incorporates the classical versions of epic death and burial in his poem, but carefully links them to the otherness of the pagan enemy, rather than to the Christian crusaders. As Lauren Seem has recently argued, the death of Argante in canto XIX rehearses the Virgilian ending, but also transforms it, by removing it from the absolute terminus of the work and by redefining the significance of the enemy's death. In fact, through the death scenes of the greatest pagan champions, Solimano as well as Argante, Tasso emphasizes specifically classical concepts of dying. With Argante a Stoic ethos prevails ("vuol morendo anco parer non vinto" XIX.1; "he wishes even in dying to appear undefeated"; "moriva Argante, e tal moriva qual visse" 26; "Argante died, and he died just as he had lived"); while with Solimano one canto later we find instead a tragic fatalism and despair (XX.73, 104-108). In this case, then, the all-purpose alterity of the pagans becomes a figure for the traditional critique of the classical world-view from a Christian perspective.

This contrast between classical and Christian concepts of heroic dying is

⁹ In the *Apologia* (434) Tasso observes that in the poems of Homer and Virgil, the deaths of Hector and Turnus are "principalissime."

¹⁰ For the imitation of Virgil and a survey of the range of interpretive possibilities in the close of the *Furioso* see Sitterson. Ariosto criticism has been divided between those who stress the poem's plural, "romance" or Ovidian, form (e.g., Javitch 1976 & 1984) and those who insist on the importance of the addition of epic, neo-Virgilian elements of structure to the earlier chivalric poems of Boiardo and others (Quint 1979; Fichter; Ascoli). See Kallendorf on the question of how Virgil was read and rewritten in the Quattrocento and before.

brought out with special clarity by Tancredi's insistence that his worthy foe Argante be given the ritual burial and the verbal honor, the terrestrial glory, that his creed demands:

. . . egli morì qual forte
onde a ragion gli è quell'onor devoto
che solo in terra avanzo è de la morte.
(XIX.117.2-4)

("he died as a man of strength; whence with reason he is owed that honor which alone remains on earth after death.")

In the very next stanza, however, Tancredi stresses the sharp limitations on the sheerly nominal fame accruing to his foe, contrasting it with the "extraterrestrial" life beyond death available to Christian believer: he says that he will now go to Jerusalem

ché 'l loco ove morì l'Uomo immortal
può forse al Cielo agevolare la strada,
e sarà pago un mio pensier devoto
d'aver peregrinato al fin del voto.
(118.5-8)

("because the place where the immortal Man died, may perhaps ease the way to heaven; and my devout desire [or thought] to have completed a pilgrimage to the end of my vow will be appeased").

The "devoto/voto" pun which closes the stanza just cited echoes Goffredo's words from the first canto (23.8) and specifically previews the rhymed couplet which ends the poem. At the same time, it stands in direct, contrastive relation with a rhyme that appears just after Tancredi has killed his pagan foe:

Ripone Tancredi il ferro, e poi devoto
ringrazia Dio del trionfal onore;
ma lasciato di forze ha quasi vòto,
la sanguigna vittoria il vincitore
(XIX.27)

("Tancredi puts away his sword and thanks God devoutly for this triumphal honor; but the bloody victory has left the victor almost emptied of strength.")

"Voto," vow, has been replaced by the identically spelled, "vòto" ("vuoto" in modern Italian, meaning "empty"), indicating Tancredi's own nearness to a death as meaningless as his enemy's. By fulfilling his vow (*voto*), Tancredi will escape the void (*vòto*) that has engulfed Argante.

While the "voto/devoto" rhyme appears several times during the course of the poem (for example, at I.23; II.5; III.70; XI.23), usually recalling the Crusaders' devout vows and thus reminding the reader of the narrative's ultimate

telos, the introduction of this punning counterpart is held back until the final two cantos, when it suddenly proliferates. As we have just seen it appears in the Tancredi/Argante subplot, which recommences in canto XIX when Argante pointedly reminds Tancredi that he had violated his promised faith (that is, his chivalric vow) to return to battle earlier and accuses him of letting “le promesse ir vòte” (2.6: “your promises were empty”). It crops up again conspicuously in final installment of the Armida/Rinaldo subplot in book XX, where Tasso introduces the first and only rhyming of “voto” with “vòto” (63.7-8: “lo stral volò, ma con lo strale un voto / subito uscì, che vada il colpo a vòto” “the arrow flew [toward Rinaldo], but with the arrow [Armida] let fly a vow that the blow should be in vain”).

A further conjunction of the two homonyms comes in a passage which clearly anticipates Goffredo’s laying aside of his “arme pietose,” when Tisaferno vows to dedicate his arms to “Macon” if he succeeds in killing Rinaldo for Armida, a vow destined to remain empty and unfulfilled:

“qui prego il Ciel che ‘l mio ardimento aiuti,
e veggia Armida il desiato scempio:
Macon, s’io vinco, i’ voto l’arme al tempio.”
Così pregava, e le preghiere ir vòte;
ché ‘l sordo suo Macon nulla n’udiva.
(113.6-8; 114.1-2)

(“‘Here I pray the Heavens that they aid my boldness and that Armida may witness the desired slaughter: Mohammed, if I win I vow my arms to the temple.’ Thus he prayed, but the prayers went unfulfilled, because his deaf Mohammed heard nothing of them.”)

The emptiness of pagan vows and the vacancy of a meaningless death that awaits the neoclassical champions is thus carefully poised by Tasso against the fulfilled vows and the emptiness of a tomb that promises eternal life beyond the grave for “fedeli” such as Tancredi and Goffredo. The “liberated” sepulchre is at once the sign of death and of liberation from death, as of the poem’s participation in and alienation from an epic past. And this is true in another sense, as well, one which raises more directly a question of poetics and often places the epic poet himself before, or even within, a tomb like those he represents.

Again, we should begin with the *Aeneid*, which in book VI adopts the perspective of the Elysian underworld and of the dead to achieve a clarifying vision of Roman history. The Virgilian dead remain oriented toward historical life (Dido, Palinurus, Anchises all share this common trait — that they look back to their own former lives for meaning), while the cyclicity of metempsychosis gives mythic substance to the endless interweaving of death and life implied by the fundamental equivocation of a foundation which is also a burial.¹¹ Nonetheless, only the gaze from beyond the tomb can fully uncover the

¹¹ On the classical models of the otherworld which most influenced Virgil, see Homer, *Odyssey*,

meaning of Aeneas' epic mission. And in a famously "cryptic" image of the gate of false dreams through which Aeneas returns to the light and to life, Virgil tacitly identifies that gaze of death with an ivory and orphic *poetics* which are surely those of his own poem.¹²

Tasso's understanding of Virgil was heavily mediated, above all through the two most powerful post-classical epic poets of the Italian tradition at that time, Dante and Ariosto. Dante, of course, set a formidable, if particular, precedent for revising the Virgilian epic in Christian terms. He is a constant point of reference in Tasso's theoretical discussions of poetry,¹³ and, as we shall see, also provides the most obvious source for the *Gerusalemme*'s language and thematics of "avowal." The *Commedia*, it need hardly be said, openly embraces the perspective of the "oltretomba" — turning the excursus of Virgil's book VI into the substance of Dante's own vision. Death again is the interpreter of life, providing the necessary "alienation" to see and understand it. But now rather than death bending toward life, the meaning of historical life consists precisely and only in its destiny after death (at least at the explicitly doctrinal level). Dante and his poem assume the perspective of the "giudizio universale," neither before nor inside the tomb, but beyond it.

By contrast, Tasso's immediate precursor, Ariosto, while imitating the end of the *Aeneid* in the conclusive death of Rodomonte, seems to renounce access to either the Virgilian or the Dantean perspective of the "oltretomba." For Quint (1979) this ending means nothing more than the inevitability of human dying, redeemed neither by the social-political continuity envisioned by Virgil nor by the religious (and perhaps also political) transcendence of Dante. I, instead, would argue that Ariosto associates his poem's perspective with the "vocal tomba di Merlino" ("the speaking tomb of Merlin" [Ascoli 1987: 361-376]), as well as with the ambiguously parodic apocalypse of the "heaven of the moon" (264-304). In particular I claim that in canto III of the *Furioso* Merlin, neither alive nor dead, neither saved nor damned, figures the predicament of a poem

book XI, and Plato's Myth of Er in *Republic*, book X, which is also the locus classicus for metempsychosis.

¹² This image has been a perennial crux. My suggestion is that the gate of ivory is anticipated associatively by a series of images in Book VI: at lines 645-47 Vergil refers periphrastically to Orpheus, priest of Apollo and archetypal poet, mentioning specifically his "ivory quill" ("pectine . . . eburno"), which clearly anticipates the "porta . . . eburna" of VI.898. Orpheus is also mentioned earlier (VI.119-20), there with suggestive reference to his attempt to bring his dead wife back to the land of the living, out of Hades. For parallels between Aeneas' descent to Hell and Orpheus', see Putnam, 41-48, who does not note this particular connection. Orpheus' descent is recounted at length in *Georgics* IV, where he is clearly linked qua poet-figure to Virgil himself. Reinforcing the general theme of vatic song and artistic creation are the description of Daedalus' carvings (14-33), as well as the encounter with Musaeus, "optime vates," and other prophetic singers (661-76) in Elysium. The ivory gate is anticipated by the vision of the tree of false dreams at lines 281-94.

¹³ See, for example, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, translated in Rhu 1993: esp. 119, 139, 142-45. See Looney.

which has survived its author's death but cannot transcend his limited, living, perspective to give final interpretation either to the meaning of history or to the possibility of a life beyond this one.

Tasso's sepulchre, one might then say, reflects a poetics that yearns for epic totality and Dantean transcendence but that feels its own greater proximity, historical and otherwise, to the errors of Ariostan romance and to the perspective of mortality.¹⁴ Like Dante's poem, Tasso's tomb is the sign that true meaning and true life dwell beyond history. Like Ariosto's poem, however, Tasso's remains essentially within the confines of temporality (Greene: 191-192; Murrin: 126). Although the author introduces both the divine and the demonic perspectives into the poem, his characters encounter it principally in dream, and rarely step beyond it literally.¹⁵ Tasso's theoretical discussions of epic, in fact, insist programmatically on the necessary "historicity" of its subject, while allowing for the introduction of incidental fictions.¹⁶ In Tasso's poem, the tomb is not just the beginning of a journey, as it is for Dante — it is the textual endpoint. You may be able to go beyond it, but Tasso's poetry cannot take you, or him, there.

So far I have made a relatively loose, associative connection between Dantean and Ariostan poetics of "oltretomba" and "tomba," respectively, and Tasso's terminal image. But there are more specific textual connections that link the Crusaders' and especially Goffredo's quest for the tomb with, on the one hand, both of Tasso's Italian precursors, and, on the other, with the poet's own narrative quest to complete the *Liberata*. The crucial link, again, is the concept of the "vow," or "voto." The Crusaders' vow is clearly, as Aquinas defines it, "a promise made to God," a paradoxical act of human will which is a "sacrifice of the will," voluntarily enslaving the soul to God by a commitment to do (or not to do) something.¹⁷ It is analogous to and yet sharply distinguished from the ethos of Stoic-chivalric "fides," or pledged word, which guides the "cavallieri" of romance, Ariostan and otherwise.¹⁸ It is also, as we shall see, potentially assimilable to the problem of linguistic and especially poetic referentiality and

¹⁴ For Tasso's complex attitude toward Ariosto's romance (which he insisted on seeing as failed epic), see Ferguson 1983: esp. 54, 62-70; Quint 1983: 102-06, 116-17; Langer: 43-44; Zatti 1991: 203-16. On his attitude toward the epic/romance question, see *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, translated in Rhu 1993: esp. 120-34; and, in addition to the previously cited critics, Fichter: 153 and Looney

¹⁵ Even the magical aids of the "Mago d'Ascalona" remain technically within the realm of the natural, using sublunary Fortune as a primary agent (on the Mago, see Quint 1983: esp. 94-97).

¹⁶ On Tasso's complex sense of the relation between historical fact and the matter of poetry, see especially his *Discorsi dell'arte poetica*, book 1, translated in Rhu 1993. See also Durling: 192-195 and note 38 below.

¹⁷ Aquinas II.II q. 88, esp. art. 1. For Aquinas, vows are a subspecies of sacrifice (II.II. q.85), as they are for Dante as well (*Paradiso* V.43-44). Thus it is not surprising that Tasso's "voto" figures as both "promise and offering" (pace Langer: 43).

¹⁸ On Tasso's general relation to the sixteenth century instantiation of the chivalric code of honor, see Ersparmer 1982. On his attitudes toward chivalric romance, see note 14 above.

intentionality, both on the "metaphoric" axis of external reference (poet's word corresponds to historical reality or not) and on the "metonymic" axis of internal unity effected through narrative (poem's ending corresponds, or not, to what is promised at its beginning).¹⁹

The Tassian language of avowal, as I have described it so far, clearly derives from Dante's Heaven of the Moon, where dwell souls (Piccarda de' Donati; the Empress Constance) who were by force constrained to break religious vows and thus are placed in the lowest realm of the blessed. Note particularly the "voto" / "vòto" pun that will become so crucial for Tasso:

E questa sorte che par giù cotanto,
però n'è data, perché fuor negletti
li nostri voti, e vòti in alcun canto.
(*Paradiso* III.55-57)

("And this lot, which appears so lowly, is given to us because our vows were neglected and void in some particular")²⁰

That Dantean episode, not coincidentally, had earlier become a principal source for Ariosto's parodically transcendent representation of the inconstancy of human minds and words in his famous lunar episode (*Orlando furioso* XXXIV.67-XXXV.31), where, prominent among the other items in the junk heap of vanities, are "infiniti prieghi e voti . . . / che da noi peccatori a Dio si fanno (XXXIV.74.7-8: "infinite prayers and vows . . . which we sinners make to God"; see also 82.6).²¹

It is important to note here how Tasso's treatment of vows borrows elements from both predecessors but also alters them.²² In *Paradiso* III-V, Dante represents salvation achieved *in spite of* contingent historical disruptions in the "sacrifice of the will" to God which is effected by a religious "voto." Moreover, he also warns stringently, in what may well have appeared to a reader from Tasso's time a signally pre-Lutheran moment, against making vows that cannot and should not be fulfilled (*Paradiso* V.64-73).²³ By contrast, the Christian

¹⁹ I adapt Jakobson's distinction between the metaphoric and metonymic poles of language.

²⁰ Text and translation of the *Commedia* are taken from Singleton. I am indebted to Walter Stephens and to John Freccero for insisting on the importance of *Paradiso* III-V for understanding the "voto/vòto" connection in Tasso. I have found Freccero's suggestions concerning the poetics articulated in the early cantos of *Paradiso* particularly helpful in developing my argument. Ferguson points to Tasso's allusion to Dante's Piccarda in the dialogue *Del piacere onesto*, again in connection with his father's "involuntary" breaking of obligations (91).

²¹ Citations are taken from the Bigi edition of *Orlando furioso*. On this aspect of the episode see Ascoli: 264-304, esp. 285-286 and nn.

²² For a subtle discussion of Tasso's interweaving of Dantean and Ariostan pretexts in another connection, see Looney. See also Ferguson: 57, 106-107 et passim.

²³ Admittedly, even Aquinas (II.II.q.88) puts some qualifications on what vows are appropriate and to whom.

cavaliers of the *Liberata*, at least when they are not "erranti," prove their faith and ensure their salvation by fulfilling their vows, while only the pledges of pagan infidels remain "vuoti." By insisting on the successful fulfillment of vows, Tasso clearly rejects the Ariostan satire that threatens to generalize Dante's limited acceptance of human weakness and inconstancy in *Paradiso* III-V to such an extent that it infects and undermines all religious commitments and the belief on which they are founded. But the very vehemence and rigor of his representations of Goffredo's constancy suggests that he *was* in some ways persuaded by Ariosto's serious, if comically articulated, critique of Dante's treatment of vows: he simply cannot allow for the possibility of a salvation achieved *despite* the incompleteness of a vow or the outright failure to fulfill it.²⁴ Tasso, haunted by the specter of heterodoxy, yearning for a transcendence of which, however, he can permit himself only the most fugitive glimpses (e.g. I.7-17; XIV.2-19; XX.20-21), finds it crucial to make word match deed in God's (or the Inquisition's or the Duke's) eyes. Refusing alike the accommodating mysteries of Dante and the comfortable demystifications of Ariosto, which perhaps bear a troubling resemblance to the protestant, and especially Lutheran, attacks on religious vows as needless vanities, he represents the making and keeping of vows as not only possible and desirable, but indeed as necessary. For Tasso, it seems, vows provide an essential structure and order for defining and grounding human selves otherwise divided by doubts and corrupted by sensual delights and violent passions.²⁵

Furthermore, in both Dante's heaven of the moon and Ariosto's calque on it, a thematics of vows and human inconstancy gives rise to reflections on the nature of poetic referentiality which, at least implicitly, create a problematic analogy between the word of promise and the poet's fictions. The case of the souls who have left unfulfilled the letter of a vow but whose "absolute will" (IV.109) still cleaves inwardly to God, frames and parallels the account of the metaphorical quality of Scriptural reference, where a failure of referential adequation still points toward the invisible Truth of God:

Così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno,

²⁴ It is, however, true, as Hampton points out (107-08), that Goffredo must give up a "personal" vow to fight as a common soldier in order to fulfill the greater demands of the collective vow to liberate the Holy Sepulchre. On "Goffredo's error" in canto XI, and the place of this individual vow in that larger context, see Bruscagli, esp. 221-22.

²⁵ It is in this sense that we should interpret Tasso's hyperbolic outburst in the *Apologia*: "rompendosi il giuramento si guasterebbe il mondo" (423). Conversely, it illuminates his reluctance to make a commitment concerning a possible change of patrons in a letter to Scipione Gonzaga of 24 March 1576: "non volendo *prometter* io cosa che non volessi osservare con la mia ruina, non mi *risolvo* di venire ad una *risoluta* promessa . . ." and "non mi *legarò* con nuovo *nodo* così forte, ch'io non mi possa con buona occasione *disciorre*" (#57 in Guasti ed.; emphasis mine). Note the metaphors of binding and loosing that accompany the *voto* of the *Liberata* as well; cf. notes 26, 29 & 35 below.

però che solo da sensato apprende
 ciò che fa poscia d'intelletto degno.
 Per questo la Scrittura condescende
 a vostra facultate, e piedi e mano
 attribuisce a Dio e altro intende. . . .
 (IV.40-45)

("It is needful to speak thus to your faculty, since only through sense perception does it apprehend that which it afterwards makes fit for the intellect. For this reason Scripture condescends to your capacity, and attributes hands and feet to God, having other meaning. . . .")

And, as Freccero points out, this account of Scriptural figures is applied explicitly and *a fortiori* to Dante's own representations of the blessed, and thus "the whole of *Paradiso* . . . has no existence, even fictional, beyond the metaphoric" (211; cf. 222). Much like Piccarda and Constance, Dante cannot make his "words of promise," his "poema sacro," coincide completely with reality.

As I have argued elsewhere, Ariosto's "allegory of poets and theologians" in the lunar episode turns precisely this acknowledgement of the non-correspondence of human language and intellect to divine referent against the authoritative texts in which faith should be grounded and which claim to offer a referential bridge between human history and God's eternity — first of all the *Commedia* itself, everywhere echoed and nowhere taken seriously — but also, more devastatingly, the New Testament, whose most authoritative scribe, St. John of the Gospel and of Revelations, is on hand to reduce himself and his texts to the status of lying flattery (Ascoli: 285-291).

Tasso too moves analogically from the domain of his narrative and thematic representations into a consideration of the status of the poetics that subtends those representations, and in a way that suggests he has both Dante and Ariosto's critique of Dante in mind as he does so. Just as at the thematic level, so at that of "metapoetics" Tasso moves anxiously between his two predecessors. While he is, like Dante, trying to write a poem that is unequivocally Christian, and thus cannot include Ariosto's playful near-sacrilege, he has also taken to heart the *Furioso's* exposé of the dangers inherent in claiming access through human words to ultimate Truth, and especially the mad pride of putting poetry at or near the level of sacred Scripture, or of adopting a transcendent, eschatological perspective that begins to resemble God's own. The consequence of such considerations is that noted above: the abandonment of the perspective of the "oltretomba" in favor of a quest for a "gran tomba" which, however, gestures beyond itself to a higher reality of eternal life.

It is not surprising, especially in light of the Dantean and Ariostan "pretexts" just discussed, that Tasso's metapoetic concerns appear most explicitly in the incomplete and uneasy parallel between the Crusader's vow to take Jerusalem and his commitment to write the poem in which the story of

their vow and its consequences is narrated (Chiappelli: 178-181; Langer: 43-44; Zatti 1983: 93 & 1991: 207-208). In the fourth stanza of the first canto, Tasso makes one of his rare first person appearances in the poem, in order to define his own and his text's relationship to their patron, Duke Alfonso II d'Este:

Tu, magnanimo Alfonso, il qual ritogli,
al furor di fortuna e guidi in porto
me *peregrino errante*, e fra gli scogli
e fra l'onde agitato e *quasi absorto*,
queste mie carte in lieta fronte accogli,
che *quasi in voto* a te *sacrate* i' porto
[emphasis mine].

("You, magnanimous Alfonso, who remove me from the fury of Fortune and guide me, a wandering pilgrim, to port, who had been tossed and almost consumed among the waves and cliffs, gather up with a glad countenance these my pages which I bring consecrated to you almost as a vow.")

Tasso's wandering or errant pilgrimage is thus a shakier version of that of the "peregrin devoto" who Goffredo soon after imagines seeking out the Sepulchre in safety (I.23) — his offering "quasi in voto" to Alfonso a less stable variant on that generic pilgrim's, and Goffredo's own, vow. The substance of the "voto" is first of all a commitment to writing a poem, this poem. But the "carte . . . sacrate" — consecrated if not truly sacred — figure not only as the fruit of a vow, but as the verbal record of that vow, both the promised words and the words of promise themselves. Otherwise put, Tasso dramatizes his poem as a vow to be fulfilled, a word to be kept. Thus, when Goffredo "scioglie il voto" with the simultaneous liberation of Jerusalem and the Sepulchre, Tasso analogically fulfills, and is thus symbolically released from, his vow as well, as he completes his representation of Goffredo's vow and its fulfillment (Martinelli: 13 & 17).

To understand more fully the significance of this convergence between the narrative that Tasso writes and the "metanarrative" of Tasso's writing, we need to consider further why it is that the poem focuses so intensely on the "voto" or vow and especially why it is so consistently paired with the action of "scioglimento"²⁶ — literally the release or dissipation which signifies the fulfillment of a vow but also denotes its annihilation. As I began to suggest above, a vow is a formal promise that binds and constrains the one who makes it to transform a word or metaphorically verbal intention into an internal and external reality.²⁷ In Tasso's world, then, the chivalric pledge or promise of faith

²⁶ On the recurrence of the verb "sciogliere" and derivatives in the poem, see Chiappelli: 153-54.

²⁷ In the *Apologia* Tasso defines "giuramento" (which though not identical with "voto" is related to it) as "un parlare confermato co 'l nome di dio, o vero un parlare con venerazione divina che non riceve altra pruova: e colui pare che peccchi in estremo grado, il quale fa giuramento falso"

("fede") which dominates the world of Ariosto (where it is, however, almost always violated or contaminated)²⁸ is conflated with and/or superseded by the Christian believer's "voto" — just as the *cavalier's* aimless errancy is replaced by the Crusader's directed pilgrimage. The human word of promise thus looks to ground itself in the Logos, the Word of God.

In either case, chivalric or Christian, the paradigmatic narrative structure of the "voto" should be clear (cf. Hampton: 98-100). Between the pilgrim-crusader's pledged word and its fulfillment lies the story told in Tasso's poem, between Tasso's poetic "voto" and its conclusion — and its hoped for coincidence with historical and/or transcendent reality — lie the words of the *Liberata* themselves. In this connection it is crucial that Tasso consistently uses the verb "sciogliere" and derivatives in his theoretical discussions of the "unfolding" and "tying together" of narrative form, and that this word marks the parallel between religious and poetic quests just as strongly as the echoes of "voto" do.²⁹ At the same time, "scioglimento" is itself a name for the *liberation* that both the Crusaders and the poet seek — by achieving the freedom of city and tomb from the oppression of the "Other," Goffredo and the Crusaders achieve their own freedom from the constraint, their freely assumed bondage, to fulfill a word of promise; by "tying together" the various loose ends resolved in cantos XVIII-XX, Tasso paradoxically unties the knot ("scioglie il nodo") of narrative complication into the simplicity of unity and the silence of ending.

It is no accident then that the terminus of both vows, the scene of their liberating "scioglimento" is the Holy Sepulchre: "adorar 'l gran sepolcro e scioglie il voto."³⁰ The freedom of release from a binding vow is closely

(423). Compare Cicero's definition of "fides, id est dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas" and especially the Stoic etymology which he gives for the word, "quia fiat, quod dictum est, appellatam fidem" (*De officiis* I.vii.23: "faith, that is, constancy and truth in what is spoken and what is agreed," "Because it calls into being what is spoken, it is called faith"; my translation). Faith in this active, moral sense is the virtuous agency which makes it possible to fulfill a promise or vow, religious, political, or otherwise.

²⁸ For "fede" as the paradigmatic value of the *Furioso* see Saccone 1974 and 1983. For a critique of that account, see Bonifazi, Ascoli 1987, esp. 285-86, 329-31 and nn, Zatti 1990: 95-106 and nn. Ferguson (62-70) is especially valuable on this score in her discussion of Tasso's attack on the confused faith of Ruggiero in his *Apologia* (esp. 422-25), which she sees as connected to his own father's catastrophically divided loyalties.

²⁹ Zatti 1983: 123 & n. Relevant examples are in the *Apologia*, "Aristotile parla di quella necessità senza la quale non si potrebbe legare o sciogliere la favola" (453), and in several of the *Lettere*, notably that of 16 September 1575 to Luca Scalabrini (#45 in Guasti ed.), with its discussion of the "soluzione per macchina." In the latter text Tasso makes the metaphor of narrative *promise* explicit: "Il poeta fornisce come comincia, e osserva quel che prometta" (107).

³⁰ In light of Zatti's compelling findings (1992) concerning the representational, poetic associations of the word "manto" and the systematic echoes which invest both landscape and characters with those associations (cf. IV.25.8: "[Armida] fa manto del ver alla menzogna"), perhaps we should add the phrase describing Goffredo's still-bloody garb ("né pur deposto il sanguinoso manto" XX.144.5) to the list of terms that create a doubling between Goffredo's story

identified in the text with the corporeal disintegration of a physical death, albeit one whose ultimate significance is eternal life. The application to the story of "l capitan" is clear enough. The death of the historical Goffredo took place in the year following the conquest of Jerusalem (1099). And within Tasso's text the character's physical demise is already predicted during the appearance of Ugone in canto XIV, where it is directly contrasted with the possibility of earthly rule over the conquered Jerusalem, which devolves upon his otherwise undistinguished brother.³¹ For Goffredo, presumably, the adoration of the Tomb and his release into death signify the departure from the pain of this world into the beatitude of the next, and perhaps as well the transcendence of the constraints of impersonally allegorical "role-playing." As "capitan," we know, he plays head to Rinaldo's hand throughout the poem, and in the final lines he is still the "sommo duce" who leads ("conduce") the others ("altri") into the blessed anonymity of individual redemption.³²

For Tasso, by contrast, the meaning of this conclusive release out of narrative and of language itself is not so obvious. His "carte" after all, were only offered "quasi in voto" (I.4.6), and, at least as he presents them at the beginning of the poem, they are only a pledge in earnest, the avowal of a future vow, of something else to be written — the story of Alfonso's successful "emulation" of Goffredo's Crusade (cf. Langer: 44). Moreover, as a "peregrino errante" (who not once but twice in a single stanza uses the word "quasi" of himself [cf. I.4.4: "quasi absorto"]), he dwells uncertainly between the "cavallieri erranti" who populate Ariosto's seemingly endless romance (and who are apparently never able to make faithfully pledged word and historical reality coincide) and the "peregrino devoto" who is the hero of the *Liberata*.³³

My final gloss on the last line of the *Liberata* will require yet another detour out of Tasso's poem and back into *Orlando furioso*. Attention has recently been called to the Ariostan reminiscence in *Liberata* canto 1, stanza 4 — showing that

and Tasso's story-telling.

³¹ In XX.20, Goffredo concluding his hortatory speech to the troops has his head surrounded by a lampant halo of light which some take to be a sign of future rule ("segno / alcun pensollo di futuro regno"), which, however, the reader will take figuratively, already alerted to the imminence of Goffredo's death.

³² On the vexed question of the deployment of political and moral allegory in the poem, see Derla, Murrin, Rhu 1988, and Stephens 1991, contra.

³³ See Klopp; Chiappelli: 180-81 & 224n154; Zatti 1983: 96-97, 112. Langer puts it succinctly: "Tasso recasts the poet figure as 'peregrino,' but cannot avoid adding the ambiguous 'errante,' which is not only a depiction of Christian life as a *peregrination* between birth and death, but also recalls Ariosto's 'errare sempre' (XLVI.1.6)" (44). As Ferguson notes, in the *Apologia* Tasso applies the word "peregrino" to express his own sense of alienation, corporeal and familial: "invoco la memoria, come fanno i poeti, e colui [Bernardo Tasso] che me la diede insieme con l'intelletto, quando il mando ad abitare in questo corpo quasi peregrino" (426). See also the autobiographical "Canzone al Metauro," line 4, where Tasso describes himself as "fugace peregrino."

Tasso's initial hope to be brought into safe haven after voyaging on dangerous seas clearly echoes Ariosto's image of a return to friendly shores after a long, "errant," voyage on the open ocean of poetry at the beginning of the forty-sixth and final canto of the *Furioso* (Langer: 43-44; Zatti 1991: 206-208). Tasso's "voto" to his patron thus corresponds and responds to Ariosto's hope "nel lido i voti sciogliere" ("to fulfill my vows [by arriving] on the shore"), which in turn refers us back to the reference to a promise made to his patron, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, in the second stanza of the *Furioso*'s first canto. In this way, Tasso expresses the terrors of romance error — the straying of poetic multiplicity, heterodoxy, and difference that he consistently associates in his theoretical writings with Ariosto — only in order to avoid them, apotropaically.³⁴ But if Tasso *begins* where Ariosto ends, he *ends* there as well, since the closing lines of the *Liberata* echo the *Furioso* just as directly as the opening stanzas do, the Ariostan "nel lido i voti sciogliere spero" recurring in the Tassian "scioglie il voto."³⁵

At one level, these repetitions means that Tasso's obsession with the error which he attempts to project onto the poetic "Other," Ariosto, has not been overcome by poem's close, and remains a haunting presence internal to the *Liberata*. But it means something else as well. Despite the celebratory scene that Ariosto projects for the arrival of his "carte" on the poetic shoreline where its courtly readers await it, the "scioglimento" of vows has a darker side for him too. In fact, the "lido" of courtly readers is haunted by an accompanying reference to the banks of the river Styx (*Furioso* XLVI.9.5-6) — that is, to the possibility that the *real* terminus of Ariosto's poetic journey is precisely death (Ascoli 1987: 364-365; cf. Quint 1979). And indeed the metaphor of "scioglimento" returns again in the very last stanza of the poem, where the embittered soul of the dying Rodomonte is described as "*sciolta dal corpo più freddo che ghiaccio*" (140.6: "released from the body, colder than ice"; emphasis mine) as he plummets down to that other river of the dead, Acheron. Ariosto's solution to this threat, I have argued, is first to defer the moment of deathly "scioglimento" as long as possible, but also to figure the poem itself as "vocal tomba," the loquacious sepulchre which goes on speaking long after its author's life has ended.

Like Ariosto before him, Tasso obliquely confronts the abyss between language and death precisely at the point when his poem is drawing to its close. A number of passages are suggestive in this regard,³⁶ but an unusually dense

³⁴ See note 14 above.

³⁵ As we have already begun to see, the final canto of Tasso's poem is in fact thick not only with "voti" but also with the imagery of "scioglimento," and the synonymous "solvere," in a variety of contexts, e.g., stanzas 71, 91, 101, 102, 105, 135-36, 144.

³⁶ For example: 33.7-8, "poi fèr la gola e tronca al crudo Alarco / de la voce e del cibo il doppio varco"; 39.5-8, "Trafitto è . . . insin là dove il riso / ha suo principio, e 'l cor dilata e spande, / talché (strano spettacolo ed orrendo!) ridea sforzato e si moria ridendo"; See also 51.5-8; 56.7-8;

constellation of references occurs in a six stanza stretch near the end of canto XX. Gildippe and Odoardo, "amanti e sposi," dying by the hand of Solimano "vorrian formar, né pon formar parole" (100.3: "would like to form words, but are unable to do so"). Failure to speak is here, as often, the clear index of impending death. Their deaths, however, unleash the words of others: "Allor scioglie la Fama i vanni al volo; le lingue al grido" (101.1-2: "then Fame releases her wings to flight, and tongues to shouting"; emphasis mine). The locution "scioglie . . . il volo" obviously anticipates "scioglie il voto,"³⁷ while creating a defining contrast with it. *Fama*, the notoriously unreliable personification of the public circulation of language which purports to bear witness to the significant events of history, but in fact indiscriminately mixes truth with falsehood (see *Aeneid* IV.173-197, esp. 190 "pariter facta atque infecta canebat"), is the demonized opposite of *voto*, the private performance of a given linguistic promise — which, when successful, precisely converts word into deed, establishing iron bonds of reference. The juxtaposition of the two moments may well recall the opening ambivalence of the Tassian narrator who seeks pardon for adding "fregi al ver" (I.2.7), contaminating truth with fiction, moral teaching with illicit pleasure³⁸ — an ambivalence from which the poet hopes to be released precisely by the fulfillment of his narratological vow.

The episode in fact begins with an apostrophe to the defunct Gildippe and Odoardo, in which the narrator makes one of his rare appearances:

Gildippe ed Odoardo, i casi vostri
duri ed acerbi e i fatti onesti e degni
(se tanto lice a i miei toscani inchiostri)
consacrerò fra' peregrini ingegni,
sí ch'ogn'età *quasi* ben nati mostri
di virtute e d'amor v'additi e segni,
e co 'l suo pianto alcun servo d'Amore
la *morte vostra* e le *mie rime* onore.
(94; emphasis mine)

("Gildippe and Odoardo, if so much is permitted to my Tuscan pen, I will consecrate your harsh and bitter fates and your noble and worthy deeds among those of rare wit, so that every age will point you out and signal you as excellent examples of virtue and of love, and [so that] some servant of Love may, with his tears, honor your death and my rhymes.")

These lines position the narrator's poetic language at a mid-point between the

77.3-5; 89.7-8.

³⁷ See XX.63.7-8, cited above in the text, for an explicit juxtaposition of "voto" and "volo" earlier in the same canto.

³⁸ On the ambivalent poetics defined in I.2, see Zatti 1983: esp. 34-37; on the Tassian obsession with a language of "dissimulation" where truth and falsehood intertwine indistinguishably, see Erspamer 1989 and Zatti 1992. See Greene: 180.

consecrating efficacy of avowal ("consacrerò fra' peregrini ingegni," with a double echo of I.4) and the divulgative function of *Fama*. Moreover, they set up a suggestive parallel between the represented death and the representing rhymes ("la morte vostra e le mie rime onore").

Immediately after the slaughter of the married heroes, their murderer, Solimano, witnesses Adrasto's mortal failure to "*solver[e]* della vendetta i *voti*" against Rinaldo (102.5: "to be released [by fulfillment] from the vows of vengeance"), and soon finds himself doomed too, unable to speak out for fear: "*scioglier* talor la lingua e parlar *vole*,/ ma non seguon la *voce* o la parola" (105.7-8: "he yearns to loose his tongue and speak, but words and voice do not follow"; emphasis mine). The power of Tasso's "arte musaica" binds together, in the space of five stanzas, four key terms that all begin with "vo" (*volo*, *voti*, *vole*, *voce*) making absolutely clear the link between failure of voice and end of life, and along with them the disappearance of the willing (*vole*) self that, we have already seen, both affirms and negates itself in the making of a vow. The negative, even tragic, implications of vows unfulfilled and words unpronounced are articulated largely in relation to the pagan champion Solimano (as the "voto/vuoto" pun was earlier to Argante and Tisaferno) and they certainly contrast with the fulfillment of Goffredo's Christian vow, even as they prepare us to appreciate its full implications. What is, again, not so clear is their relation to the near-vow of the Tassian narrator to which the repeated emphasis on *voice* links them even more closely than to Goffredo's.

For the narrator-poet as "peregrino errante," to "scioglier il voto" at poem's end may be as much as to "scioglier la lingua," that is, to transcend death, Ariosto-like, by proving that one can still speak through one's surviving books.³⁹ But this is not the point where the narrator begins to speak, but rather that where he ceases to do so. We have already seen that to fulfill a vow is also to be *released from the bondage of words* — to be precisely free to remain silent at last, to exchange the "voto" for what Tasso has carefully identified as its sonorous opposite and double, the "vuoto" or void — and thus to lose oneself in the nullity of the tomb.⁴⁰ Like Goffredo in his earlier vision of the "cittadini de la città celeste," the Heavenly Jerusalem of which this one is merely a prefiguring type, Tasso yearns to be free not only from a vow but also from terrestrial life itself: "il mortal laccio / *sciolgasi* omai" (XIV.7.7-8: "let the mortal knot be loosed at last"; emphasis mine). In other words, to recognize the

³⁹ For an explicit and wildly overdetermined Tassian variant on this humanistic topos see the *Apologia*, "mio padre, il quale è morto nel sepolcro, si può dire ch'è vivo nel poema, chi cerca d'offendere la sua poesia, procura dargli morte un'altra volta" (415), as well as the gloss of Ferguson 59-60.

⁴⁰ Compare the brief, suggestive remarks of Raimondi: "il motivo del 'voto' percorre tutto il poema e ne fissa ora limpidamente l'ultima nota . . . di là dal quale ricomincia forse il conflitto delle ambivalenze e delle contraddizioni che il racconto ha tentato di sciogliere prima di approdare al silenzio, dove il fine è veramente origine" (201).

echo of an Ariostan "pre-text" in the final line of the *Liberata* is to understand that Goffredo and Tasso have each pursued quests to fulfill and to be released from vows which have the empty tomb, metonym both of death and of its possible transcendence, as their telos.⁴¹ But it is also to notice that what this relentless drive to be released from vow, narrative, and life means for the narrator is finally far less certain and reassuring than it is for the "Captain."

For Ariosto no vows, including his own, can be fulfilled, since word never truly coincides with deed, poem never fully intersects with history, much less what may lie beyond it. By accepting the contradiction at the heart of language that makes truth and falsehood, goodness and corruption, unity and multiplicity, sameness and alterity inseparable companions, Ariosto can luxuriate in the protracted deviations of romance. His "lucido intervallo" of writing (*Furioso* XXIV.3.4) is then actually a genial madness which by accepting its own alterity is able to forestall, for a time, the terminal difference of death, and then to reconcile it with the disembodied voice that lingers on in verse.

Tasso knows just as well as Ariosto the irrepressible differences within his own language — the contamination of truth and goodness with fictional "fregi" and seductive "diletti." But for him the threat of difference, whether textual, or psychological (in the form of impending madness), or religious (in the form of the heterodoxy he seeks to purge to the point of submitting himself voluntarily to the Inquisition), or political (in the form of his tormented relationship with Duke Alfonso II), or all of the above, leads him in another direction entirely, one quite in keeping with the age of academic culture, despotic courts, and Counter-Reform in which he lived. From beginning to end of the *Liberata*, he pursues the liberating and enslaving closure of a narrative vow, which will bring together word and reality,⁴² abolishing all threatening otherness, sheltering him, as Alfonso could not, from the destiny of the "peregrino errante."⁴³ From

⁴¹ My reading here is influenced, if not fully determined, by Walter Benjamin's understanding of how, in the Baroque period, the allegory of transcendent Presence gave place to the allegory of death and absence. Schematically, Tasso might be said to be "pre-Baroque" in the sense of hovering at a threshold between representing Otherness as divine presence, on the one hand, and, on the other, as the staring vacancy of the tomb. I would wish, in any case, to be more prudent than Benjamin, by taking at face value the traditional symbolism of the Holy Sepulchre, but also to insist that the incompleteness of the analogy between Goffredo's vow and quest and Tasso's ("quasi in voto," etc.) opens the way to a freer interpretation of the latter's relationship to the poem's terminal image.

⁴² Stephens 1991 has argued that against the "alieniloquium" of allegory, Tasso sought to develop a sacramental "system of poetic signification that, in its own terms, was designed to unify *Gerusalemme liberata* by bridging the gap between signifier and signified" (247). I have suggested that this is precisely the problematic which develops around the vow, which also shares the sacrificial character of sacrament. Applying my conclusions to Stephens' argument, one would conclude that Tasso certainly *aspires* to such a unitary mode of signification, but that he betrays over and over again the anxiety that it is unattainable.

⁴³ As note 33 above began to suggest, the word "peregrino," as both adjective and substantive, has

beginning to end of the *Liberata*, however, he seems aware that his literary pilgrimage will go inevitably astray, that his vow can never be fulfilled and that hence he can never be released from it, this side of the tomb. Where for Ariosto madness is the best defense against death, for Tasso, death, and above all the silence that comes with it, seems the only alternative to an endlessly loquacious madness.⁴⁴ Only there can one be freed from the ineluctable servitude of the unkeepable vow; only there, in the shadow of difference itself, can one escape from the horror of the many differences of which world and self alike are composed.

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deservedly received much attention in the criticism. As Klopp shows admirably, Tasso's most common use of the adjective is in reference to language, especially to the Aristotelian question of the employment of strange or foreign words in poetry, a fact which reinforces the connection between the psychic drama of the poet-pilgrim and the "viaggio testuale" of his language. For my purposes it is crucial that in Tasso's Italian "peregrino" means not only "pilgrim," but also "new," "strange," and, especially, "different" (see also Chiappelli: 180).

⁴⁴ This drama can be described in a more "objective" way as well, in terms of the poem's protracted compositional history. The *Liberata* is a text with a decisive ending, but it is also a text which its author never finished writing. The endless, anxious revisionary process partly documented in the "poetic letters" of 1575-76 gives eloquent testimony to Tasso's sense of the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of bringing the writing of the poem to a definitive close.

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Tasso and the Witches

If we grant — as critics regularly do — that the figure of Torquato in Tasso's *Il messaggiero* bears some autobiographical relation to the author of *Gerusalemme liberata*, then we must notice an unusually precise, intimate, and suggestive similarity between the two apparently heterogeneous texts. Like Goffredo, that most unrealistically serene paragon of Counter-Reformation epic values, the imprisoned melancholic Torquato receives an auroral visit from a celestial "messenger." The thematic, lexical, and stylistic traits shared by the two epiphanies reveal profound differences in emotional register and context that shed a penetrating and disturbing light, not so much on the nature of Tasso's malady, as on the mentality of his entire epoch. Unlike recent critics I do not believe that the *Messaggiero* is primarily significant in terms of Freudian ego-psychology.¹ Rather, I hear in the marginalized voice of "Torquato" — whether he is or is not a faithful representation of Tasso's own melancholy, and whether or not that melancholy can be understood in modern clinical terms — a lucid articulation of the spiritual malaise afflicting Tasso's society at large — both Catholics and Protestants — in the worst period of the great European witch-hunt.

Tasso was probably alone among his contemporaries in articulating the cosmological, ontological, and epistemological dislocations that provoked the witch-hunt; not until nearly 1700 did defenders of witch-hunting realize the effective metaphysical foundations of the hunt, which was by then under attack from all sides. Nor have modern historians of the witch-hunt achieved the insight displayed in *Il messaggiero*. Beginning with the great liberal, anticlerical historians of the nineteenth century, investigations of the witch-hunt have accepted the self-representations of the inquisitorial class at face-value, and thence dismissed the inquisitorial witch-mythos as *unaccountably* irrational. Thus they have concentrated on the purely social, secular dimension of the witch-hunt, seeking to explain its ultimate significance in terms of hostilities among classes, and, more recently, as a form of gender-warfare.²

¹ Basile, esp. 34, 54-55 and Schiesari 197 have some remote affinities with my reading here. But those who wish to see *Il messaggiero* as primarily about Tasso's personal pathology would do well to look at the original version of it (Raimondi 3.299-468), which is a far more "pathological" document, and yet, at the crucial point that interests Basile and Schiesari, *does not mention melancholy at all*, but rather *ubbriachezza* and *amore* (*Dialoghi* 3.332, ed. Raimondi; Basile 34-35; Schiesari 198).

² Bibliography on the witch-hunt is immense. Aside from the other works I will cite, Levack is a

The cosmology that Torquato and his celestial interlocutor discuss in the prison of Sant'Anna intimates that belief in the reality of witches was the last resort of those intellectuals who were losing their faith in the ultimate veracity of Christianity. By implication, *Il messaggiero* shows that some who were most grievously tormented by this loss of faith also built the showiest monuments to faith. In addition to the author of *Gerusalemme liberata*, their numbers probably included most of those whom we might call the inquisitorial class.³ *Il messaggiero* intimates that the hunting and killing — and the theoretical classification — of witches attracted those who must at any cost preserve their will to believe that they lived in a universe overseen by a provident, benevolent, and immanent God. As Nietzsche demonstrated by reversing the logic of Saint Paul's dictum, "'Faith' means not *wanting* to know what is true" (179), and there has never been a more devastating — or more badly understood — demonstration of this insight than the European witch-hunt of ca. 1400 to 1700.

Il messaggiero is not a *cri de coeur*; it is rather a highly crafted, syncretic, and systematic treatise on demonology and angelology.⁴ The dialogue reveals the melancholia of the inscribed Torquato as an acute instantiation of a chronic pathology that afflicted the culture of the entire literate elite. Like Tasso's highly constructed fictive self, the literate culture at large was unwillingly and anxiously skeptical, and could not convince itself that the spirit-world actually existed.⁵ Unlike him, it was unwilling or unable to enunciate and examine its skepticism consciously. This is not to assert Tasso's moral or intellectual superiority, but rather his juridical immunity. Paradoxically, it was quite safe for Tasso to enunciate these epistemological and ontological doubts, for his melancholia provided an alibi that was both psychological and physiological.⁶

recent and thorough introduction and bibliography.

³ The term "witch" will be my shorthand for "accused witch," that is, a person accused of practicing magic with intent to harm people, livestock or crops, and supposed to have had prolonged and repeated personal contact with the Devil. By "inquisitor," I will designate not only judicial officials who conducted interrogations and supervised the application of torture, but also those intellectuals who, without necessarily prosecuting witches, wrote manuals and treatises justifying the hunt. I will use both terms without inverted commas, but I wish neither to imply that witches were guilty of anything whatever, nor that all trials took place in ecclesiastical courts, much less under the auspices of the various Catholic Inquisitions. Trials took place in a great variety of legal venues, and ecclesiastical institutions were not always thoroughly engaged in the prosecution of witches — indeed, sometimes they resisted it. Thus, I will use the term "inquisitor" in a deliberately vague sense to designate the official asker of questions, whether he be lay or cleric, Protestant or Catholic, interrogator or theorist.

⁴ Baldassarri devotes much attention to the sources and peculiarities of Tasso's demonology, but even he subordinates it rigorously to other concerns: less to autobiography than to the question of *sogno*, which is indeed intimately related, and to Tasso's dialogues as genre, which is, I think, not.

⁵ By "spirit-world" I designate the most basic Christian beliefs in the existence of angels, devils, a personal God who is both benevolent and omnipotent, an incarnate savior, and an immortal human soul.

⁶ Indeed, we should remember that the first redaction of *Il messaggiero* lacks the discourse on

Furthermore, melancholics were reputed to be pathological confessors and mythomaniacs. This reputation was juridically significant, for some authorities considered melancholia sufficient grounds for dismissing even the confessions of self-styled witches (Levack 16-17).

Tasso's emotional complicity with the Inquisition is well-known from his correspondence. As his mental serenity dissipated under the strain of revising *Gerusalemme liberata*, and as his relations with Alfonso II deteriorated, Tasso sought to be interrogated by the Inquisition, fearing that he was involuntarily slipping into heresy. That he may also have had political reasons for desiring the ear of the inquisitors, and wished to implicate other dependents of the Estense court, is undeniable (certainly Alfonso appears to have feared so), but is ultimately peripheral to Tasso's hankering for reassurance about his orthodoxy.⁷ His rage when he was absolved as being merely melancholic, rather than heretical, shows that Tasso understood the institution of the Inquisition and sought relief from his doubt through interrogation and spiritual purgation (as in the *purgatio canonica*) rather than the corporeal purges administered to melancholics.⁸ And, as we shall see, the only heresy to which Tasso ever admitted was the one that inquisitors of witches were themselves most liable to, and yet could confess only obliquely, through the obsessively repetitive symptom of extracting fictitious confessions of witchcraft with torture and ventriloquism.

Through their mutual reflections and inversions, the two epiphanies of Goffredo and Torquato provide access to the profound discontinuities and contradictions between Tasso's epic and his dialogue, and, by extension and analogy, to the discrepancy between inquisitorial self-representation and inquisitorial symptomology. Properly understood, *Il messaggiero* is the inverted other, the photographic negative, of *Gerusalemme liberata*, just as, properly understood, the witch-hunt is the irrational obverse or photographic negative of rationalistic Scholastic theology, a method of surreptitiously testing the cosmology, epistemology, and ontology that it purported to accept on faith.

Elsewhere I have claimed that *Gerusalemme liberata* is a "sacramental" epic. At its precise mathematical center Tasso presents a Corpus Christi procession and Mass on the Mount of Olives, whereby, "as in Tridentine doctrine, Eucharist is the moment when the Body of Christ manifests all its aspects: the transubstantiated host, the ascended Body Historical, the re-enacted Sacrifice, and

melancholia, which was only added as the prospect of publication materialized. See Baldassarri 273, 282-83 on the daring heterodoxy of the *Messaggiero*.

⁷ Tasso's suspicion that Alfonso had obtained this absolution is well-known, but also peripheral to Tasso's travail over his own religious beliefs. Alfonso wished to deflect papal scrutiny from a court already tainted by the Calvinism of his mother Renée de France, and from a state destined to revert to the Church's temporal sovereignty if Alfonso produced no male heir (as in fact happened in 1597). See Solerti 1.257-67, Pitloru 173-87.

⁸ On forms of *purgatio* as "remedy" for heresy, see Mereu 149-72.

the incorporated Ecclesia" (Stephens, "Metaphor" 230). Tasso implies that his mode of allegorical composition is based on the mode of signification attributed by Catholic theologians to Catholic sacraments, and the body-discourse of the poem implicates the Tridentine sacraments systematically.⁹ Yet this thematic system shows an obsessiveness that reveals *Gerusalemme liberata* as a kind of talisman, an artifact through which Tasso attempted to concretize and organize a faith that he was finding increasingly elusive. At its opening, an anthropomorphic God the Father looks down upon the encampment of the Crusaders and assesses them sternly but benevolently. As Tasso describes the eyes of the *Padre eterno* and deploys an entire vocabulary of vision (*mirò, s'affisò, guardo, spia, vide, vede, scorge*), the anthropomorphism is already undercut in several ways. Most obviously because vision is at least in part a metaphor for another mode of knowledge, the discovery of the inmost dispositions (*intimi sensi*) of human emotions, themselves metaphorized as "hearts" (GL 1.7-11). Second, the comprehensive and humanly paradoxical glance of God cannot help but recall the beatific vision of Dante, both lexically and epistemologically: "in un sol punto e in una / vista mirò ciò ch'in sé il mondo aduna."¹⁰ The difference, of course, is that Dante claimed to have seen God as God sees creation, and thus for Tasso the difference is one of nostalgia and lack, for Dante's vision cannot be duplicated or even adequately remembered. Finally, because, although the anthropomorphic metaphor of vision depicts God as immanent, or participating in creation, and providential, or interested in the lives and fortunes of individuals, Tasso also depicts God as transcendent, or totally above and hence absolutely other than, all he has created, for God looks down from the Empyrean, which is farther from the sphere of the fixed stars than is that sphere itself from the deepest part of hell (GL 1.7). Hell is literally closer to us than heaven.¹¹ This passage, which should be reassuring about the fundamental assertion of Christian faith, already encapsulates the elemental contradiction of Christian theology.

The contradiction between a God of immanence and a transcendent God is, as Arthur O. Lovejoy showed, the fundamental contradiction of Christian theology, one that threatens to make the very concept of the cosmos incomprehensible, and thus must be resolved.¹² The solution is available only through a third term, either the hypostatic union of the Incarnation, which Dante glimpsed in the depth of his vision, or an angel. And so Tasso's *Padre eterno* summons Gabriel. The archangel's epithets are not quite symmetrical or synonymous: will he act as

⁹ See the extended treatments in Stephens, "Saint Paul" (177-91), and "Metaphor" (225-34).

¹⁰ GL 1.7.7-8; cf. *Paradiso* 33.55-145, esp. 85-96.

¹¹ On the larger question, see Quint 92-132, esp. 109: "The withdrawal of Tasso's deity from the natural world leaves a vacuum which demons rush in to fill."

¹² Lovejoy 82-83: "... no two notions could be more antithetic. The one was the apotheosis of unity, self-sufficiency, and quietude, the other of diversity, self-transcendence, and fecundity." Cf. 157, 315-16, 322-23, 326-27.

the herald of the heavenly court (*nunzio giocondo*), or rather, as its ambassador and translator (*interprete fedel*) in parts of the realm so remote as to be alien? This translation and interpretation is of course already in itself a metaphoric process, the closing of a gap in signification. But Gabriel's own otherness from human ontology further accentuates the gap between God and humanity: although he is intermediate between God and humanity both in essence and in function, he must nonetheless incarnate himself *fictively* in order to deliver God's message to Goffredo:

la sua forma invisibil d'aria cinse
ed al senso mortal la sottopose.
Umane membra, aspetto uman si finse,
ma di celeste maestà il compose;
tra giovane e fanciullo età confine
prese, ed ornò di raggi il biondo crine.
(GL 1.13.3-8)

The very fact that this fictive incarnation is necessary in order to make God's message intelligible can be read as a disturbing commentary on the originary incarnation of the Logos. If Gabriel is already ontologically intermediate between God and man, but must nonetheless mediate himself still further, then the hypostatic union seems by comparison abrupt and paradoxical.

This interpretation could appear capricious and exaggerated, but it is borne out by the revision of Gabriel's incarnation in *Il messaggiero*. Like Goffredo, Torquato is visited by a *messaggiero*, a *gentile spirito*. The Messenger's incarnation is described in exactly the same terms: "m'apparve un giovane ch'era ne' confini de la fanciulezza e de la gioventù" (*Dialoghi* 13, ed. Mazzali). Both spirits appear at sunrise to a man whom dawn has already awakened. But there the similarities end. Gabriel appears dramatically and triumphantly to Goffredo:

Sorgeva il novo sol da i lidi eoi,
parte già fuor, ma 'l più ne l'onde chiuso;
e porgea matutini i preghi suoi
Goffredo a Dio, come egli avea per uso;
quando a paro co 'l sol, ma più lucente,
l'angelo gli apparì da l'oriente.
(GL 1.15.3-8)

Having heard the message, Goffredo implements it immediately. More importantly, he never for an instant doubts the veracity or the ontological and epistemological bases of the vision he has just experienced:

Resta Goffredo a i detti, a lo splendore,
d'occhi abbagliato, attonito di core.
Ma poi che si riscote, e che discorre

chi venne, chi mandò, che gli fu detto,
 se già bramava, or tutto arde d'imporre
 fine a la guerra ond'egli è duce eletto.
 (GL 1.17.7-18.4)

Goffredo accepts the whole experience unproblematically as fact: he has seen, and therefore believes, that heaven has preferred him, and his acceptance is narrated as if he were already a denizen of Dante's heaven.¹³

Torquato's experience of the same kind of epiphany is radically different. Like Goffredo, he awakes at dawn, but not in order to pray; rather, he lies in a sensual *dormiveglia*:

Era già l'ora che la vicinanza del sole comincia a rischiarare l'orizzonte, quando a me, che ne le delicate piume giaceva co' sensi non fortemente legati dal sonno, ma così leggermente che il mio stato era mezzo fra la vigilia e la quiete, si fece a l'orecchio quel gentile spirto che suole favellarmi ne le mie imaginazioni, e mi chiamò per quel nome che è comune a tutti quelli i quali son nati ne la mia stirpe.

(*Dialoghi* 6, ed. Mazzali)

The impression of decadence is enhanced by a faint allusion to Petrarch's seventh sonnet, "La gola e 'l somno e l'otiose piume." Like the literary echo, the apparition is also purely aural at the beginning; significantly, he will not don a visible fictive body until after trying several other modes of apparition. This fact, coupled with the ambiguity of the term *imaginazioni*, invites the reader to imitate Torquato's doubt about the reality of the *gentile spirto*. The intermediate state Tasso evokes is thus initially not ontological but epistemological: it does not describe the being of the "messenger," but rather the indeterminacy of Torquato's mental state.

Unlike Gabriel, Torquato's Messenger has not come on any of the errands that Christianity imputes to angels. In fact, Torquato tells him, since you only bring consolation and never help, you would seem not to be an angel. The Messenger's being is as indeterminate as Torquato's mental state, since he matches none of the categories with which Christians are familiar: *angelo, anima felice, demone, anima infelice*. Perhaps, if *notturni fantasmi* are something other than these, that is what the Messenger is (*Dialoghi* 6, ed. Mazzali). The initial indeterminacy of Torquato's consciousness transmutes into an all-pervasive uncertainty about the nature of experience and essence. The mean or median state that angels like Gabriel represent in Christian ontology has here become a neutral (*ne-uter*) state, about which Torquato cannot be certain either that it is identical with him (a figment of his imagination) or that it is other than him.

13 "Non che 'l vedersi a gli altri in Ciel preporre / d'aura d'ambizion gli gonfi il petto, / ma il suo voler più nel voler s'infiamma / del suo Signor, come favilla in fiamma" (GL 1.18.5-8). Compare *Paradiso* 8.16 and 3.82-87, esp. 84.

The missing demonic body — Gabriel's artificial or fictive one and the invisible body of the Messenger — is the obsession that links *Il messaggero* to the great witch-hunt. The task of Torquato's Messenger is never to impart a mission, as Gabriel's was, but rather to bestow certainty of a special order on Torquato, to reassure him that the spirit-world actually exists. But without a visible and intrinsic body, the Messenger's most challenging task is to prove that he himself is real, rather than a very realistic hallucination. Even when he becomes visible, he cannot convince Torquato that the entire experience is not somehow imaginary, and Torquato embarks on a kind of *mise en abîme* of doubt. This vertigo fascinates contemporary psychoanalytic critics because Torquato describes his personal version of it through an examination of his melancholia.

But although Torquato wonders whether this particular spirit is a symptom of his melancholy rather than a real presence, the question is of far broader historical interest. It poses an objectively philosophical conundrum: to be assured that the spirit-world exists Torquato needs to know that he is actually talking to a spirit, rather than to himself; but this reassurance depends on knowing precisely what spirits are and how they fit into the great scheme of things. Torquato shares, in a heightened degree and with a heightened consciousness, literate Europe's anxious need to know whether the spirit-world exists and is accessible to human consciousness, and hence, by implication, whether God exists: that is, whether God is immanent in creation and accessible to human experience. Tasso's dialogue does not, and presumably cannot, explicitly pose the question of God's existence, for it is a public literary performance, subject to censure. Yet Tasso was tormented by the problem in this period. The *Messaggero* dates from early 1580, but already a year earlier, at the time of his definitive enclosure in Sant'Anna, Tasso was obsessed by doubts about the nature of God.¹⁴ Writing to his friend Scipione Gonzaga on 15 April 1579, Tasso combined a confused and often contradictory justification of his behavior with a lucid, logically and chronologically sequential account of the emotional problems that arose from his inability to believe in the immanent, providential, and personal God of Catholic Christianity.

Since it is written to a clergyman in a context that was originally private and secret, since Tasso confides that he has never dared to confess these doubts to other clergy, and because of its rigorous structure and its theological precision, this segment of the letter qualifies as a confession in the technical, sacramental sense.¹⁵ Like Saint Augustine in his own *Confessions*, Tasso stratifies his

¹⁴ In fact, given my reading of the *Liberata* as a sacramental epic intended to serve a personal talismanic function, I would imagine these doubts exacerbated the anxiety Tasso felt toward his poetic and ecclesiastical revisors, and even more toward Roman censors, concerning the doctrinal correctness of the poem (Stephens, "Metaphor" 235-47).

¹⁵ "... mi confessava e mi comunicava ne' tempi e col modo che comanda la tua Chiesa romana; e s'alcuna volta mi pareva d'aver tralasciato alcun peccato per negligenza o per vergogna, ch'io

audience, allowing Gonzaga to overhear a confession whose grammatical addressee is God:

. . . io ti conosceva solo come una certa cagione de l'universo, la quale, amata e desiderata, tira a sé tutte le cose; e ti conosceva come un principio eterno e immobile di tutti i movimenti, e come signore che in universale provvede a la salute del mondo e di tutte le specie che da lui sono contenute. Ma dubitava poi oltra modo se tu avessi creato il mondo o se pur ab eterno egli da te dipendesse; dubitava se tu avessi dotato l'uomo d'anima immortale e se tu fossi disceso a vestirti d'umanità; e dubitava di molte cose che da questi fonti, quasi fiumi, derivavano.

(*Lettere* 105. Ed. Mazzali)

In other words, Tasso confesses to being an unwilling Neoplatonist: his belief system combines an Aristotelian conviction that God is an Unmoved Mover, hardly more personal than the force of gravity, with a Platonic (or rather Plotinian) desire to see the universe as a series of emanations or "processions" of the divine.¹⁶

Tasso found belief in the Catholic sacraments all but impossible, because to his rationalist mentality the initial doubt about God's mode of being proliferated with vertiginous rapidity and thoroughness:

Percioché come poteva io fermamente credere ne i sacramenti, o ne l'autorità del tuo pontefice, o ne l'inferno, o nel purgatorio, se de l'incarnazion del tuo Figliuolo e de l'immortalità de l'anima era dubbio? I secondi dubbi, nondimeno, non da proprie radici nascevano, ma da i primi [i.e., the doubts about God's nature], quasi rami, germogliavano: pur m'incresceva il dubitarne; e volentieri da sì fatti pensieri avrei richiamato il mio intelletto, per se stesso curioso e vago de l'alte e sovrane investigazioni; e volentieri l'avrei acchetato a credere senza ripugnanza quanto di te crede e predica la santa Chiesa cattolica romana.¹⁷

(*Lettere* 105. Ed. Mazzali)

The malady to which Tasso is confessing here is not melancholy but rationalism, or, as he expresses it repeatedly in this letter, the inability to

aveva, d'avere in alcune cose di pochissima importanza vilmente operato, replicava la confessione, e molte volte la faceva generale di tutti gli errori miei. Nel manifestare nondimeno i miei dubbi al confessore, non gli manifestava con tanta forza ne le parole, con quanta mi si facevan sentire ne l'animo, percioché alcuna volta era vicino al non credere; non tanto per vergogna o per malizia, quanto per timore ch'egli non mi volesse assolvere; e fra gli altri dubbi ch'io aveva, questo era il principale, che non mi sapeva risolvere se la mia fosse miscredenza o no, e s'io potessi o non potessi essere assoluto" (*Lettere* [Mazzali] 106).

¹⁶ See *Lettere* (Guasti) 2.114: ". . . nel dialogo del Messaggerio la dottrina è platonica con qualche mistura di peripatetica, in quel modo ch'i platonici la ricevono." Quint 95-97, 238n. sees this letter as evidence of a "conversion experience," but there is no foundation for this interpretation, especially in light of the letter's anguished rhetoric.

¹⁷ See Schiesari 200-08 on the figure of the hydra.

subordinate reason to faith.

The confession to Gonzaga places an entirely different complexion on the public assertion that Tasso makes in the dedication of *Il messaggiero* to Scipione's kinsman Vincenzo, the future Duke of Mantua:

Egli è scritto secondo la dottrina de' Platonici, la quale in molte cose è diversa da la verità cristiana: laonde non dovrebbe alcuno maravigliarsi ch'io abbia posti vari mezzi fra gli uomini e Dio, come posero non sol molti filosofi, ma san Bernardo medesimo, che chiamò gli angeli mediatori, benché santo Agostino dica ch'uno sia il mediatore; né ch'io in qualche parte non riprenda i giudici de l'astrologia, i quali sono da lui in tutto riprovati e condannati; o ch'io ne la creazione de l'uomo abbia voluto seguir l'opinione di Platone, ripresa da santo Ambrosio, avegnaché, non volendo trattarne come teologo, non istimava sconvenevole lo scriverne platonicamente, e tutti gli altri modi mi parevano più contrari a la vera teologia. Ma perché tutti i filosofi debbono ricercar la verità, quantunque non per la medesima strada, io, per questa ricercandone, da quella che è somma verità ho cercato di non molto allontanarmi. Vostra Altezza dunque il legga come opera d'uomo che scrive come filosofo e crede come cristiano, e come tale vorrei che fosse veduto da gli altri. . . .
(*Dialoghi* 4-5, ed. Mazzali)

This apparently anodyne, somewhat pedantic-sounding litany of disclaimers conceals conceptual dynamite. As he often did, Tasso is here first of all disavowing any attempt to participate in the clerical monopoly on *magisterium*, or teaching about the faith. Rather than open himself to censure by presuming to speak as a theologian, he will strive merely to adumbrate the received truths of Catholic teaching, which he claims to accept unproblematically, by following the philosophical method that least conflicts with it, the Neoplatonic.¹⁸

Nevertheless, Tasso treats theology briefly, since he foresees Catholic censure of his cosmology and demonology. His mention of Saints Bernard, Augustine, and Ambrose in this context presumably circumscribes the differences between Christian and Neoplatonic theology, demonstrating their near-compatibility, and reminding us of the influence of Neoplatonic thought on patristic orthodoxy. But it actually does something far more disquieting in terms of sixteenth-century culture: it intimates that Tasso finds Neoplatonic doctrines of ontology and cosmology more comforting than those of *la vera teologia*. This hint is borne out by his subsequent discussion of witches in the context of ontology and cosmology. Tasso excuses himself for having placed "various *mezzi* between men and God." His mention of Augustine introduces what looks like a synonym of *mezzi*: although Bernard said that angels are *mediatori* between men and God, Augustine cautions that Christ is the only *mediatore*.¹⁹

¹⁸ Baldassarri 282-84; Stephens, "Metaphor" 238-41.

¹⁹ In a note to Tasso's *Dialoghi* (4n.), Mazzali traces these citations. The citation of Saint Bernard's sermon on angels (PL 183.447, 1-48) merely gives Scriptural authority for the assertion that God is served by millions of angels, and that angels facilitate his communication with

But there is a very important difference between the two terms, upon which hangs the dread that informs both Tasso's malaise and that of the inquisitors. The sense of *mezzo* is far more explicitly physical and scientific than that of *mediatore*. While *mediatore* refers to a function or activity, *mezzo* describes an ontological state. As Torquato's Messenger employs the term, *mezzo* has the technical sense of the mean or median element in a series, and it bolsters a view of the cosmos as complete, orderly, and sequential:

Or passerò a la seconda prova, con la quale io intendo di conchiudere che siano i demoni e gli angioli, presa da l'ordine de l'universo che da Dio e da la natura sua ministra è stato osservato. Non suole, se ben tu ti ricordi, passar la natura da l'uno estremo a l'altro senza alcun mezzo: laonde tra le specie inferiori e le superiori sono interposte quelle che partecipano de l'une e de l'altre. Così la natura va ascendendo da le cose sensibili a le intelligibili quasi per gradi.

(*Dialoghi* 35, ed. Mazzali)

That is, the universe must be hierarchical. Despite our inclinations to the contrary, we should regard this premise as pre-political, or at least para-political. As Lovejoy showed, hierarchy is important to pre-Darwinian cosmology for reasons that are, in logical terms, prior to and therefore more comprehensive than politics: epistemology, ontology, eschatology — in short, the rationalist's categories for the meaning of life. In this context, hierarchy is *not yet* necessary as a justification for social control or political power.

Regardless of their attitude toward Neoplatonism, Tasso and his contemporaries felt the ultimate meaning of lack or incompleteness in a cosmological context as the absence of a transition-point between matter and spirit. They feared that, without hierarchy, that is, ontological gradualism, the continuity and communicability between the human and the divine cannot be found or does not exist. But this fear was still too tremendous to be enunciated openly; Tasso's dialogue has to build toward it gradually, and without ever stressing it. Tasso expresses this fear more positively as a desire for a cosmos of *salita*, or stepwise ascent, rather than a cosmos of *salto*, or leap:

... se da l'uomo senza alcun mezzo si passasse a Dio, si salirebbe senza gradi, o non con tanti con quanti sin a lui [i.e., l'uomo] è ito ascendendo da l'una a l'altra specie: e sarebbe questa non salita, ma salto. . .

(*Dialoghi* 35, ed. Mazzali)²⁰

The near-pun is not frivolous: if there is no demonic world, then the cosmos is imperfect (literally incomplete), not for aesthetic or political reasons, but because there is a gap, an abyss, between God and humanity. The fear that we

humanity.

²⁰ See the analogous formulations in Lovejoy 60-61, 181, 184-85, 203, 217, 233, 235, 241.

live in a universe of transcendence (of *salto*), rather than a universe of immanence (of *salita*) is the real terror behind the notion of an “incomplete” universe.

The Neoplatonic conception of the cosmos as *perfectus* or complete has indeed already been discussed by the Messenger in a long disquisition on the difference between angels and daemons. Synthesizing Neoplatonic and Christian demonology, he defends a distinction between angels, who are absolutely spiritual, and daemons, who have a kind of body. This is not identical with a distinction between angels and devils (though the Messenger will use it as if it were). Daemons are not demons — or at least they were not until the Fathers of the Church got hold of them.²¹ Before Christianity redefined them, daemons could be good or evil, or, perhaps more precisely, morally neutral: it was their ontological status as *mezzo* that determined their mediatory function, not the quality of their volition. Plato, whose concept of the messenger gave Tasso the title for this dialogue, defined daemons as the mediators between the divine and the human worlds, because their essence was halfway between that of gods and that of humans.²²

Tasso's system in the *Messaggiero* needs daemons because, unlike angels, daemons have a kind of body. The Messenger defines daemons in Aristotelian terms as “substances that are corporeal, rational, able to suffer pain, and immortal.” Conversely, he says, angels are “incorporeal, intellectual and immortal, and *unable* to suffer pain.”²³ Angels and daemons share the qualities of rationality and immortality, but they differ in that daemons have a body of some subtle substance like air, and thus can feel pain; since angels have no bodies, they are immune to pain. (Gabriel's body is thus truly fictive when he appears to Goffredo.) The Messenger will go on to explain that daemons' bodily substance is so subtle that human senses cannot normally perceive it. Yet, long before he becomes visible, the Messenger makes his body known through the sense of touch, and implies that he becomes visible by assuming a *second* body (11). Likewise, he teaches Torquato that the human soul and body are conjoined by means of an intermediate body: “difficilmente l'anima vostra, pura e semplice e

²¹ Tasso is implicitly reacting against, and probably drawing on, books 8 and 9 of Augustine's *City of God*, which redefines Neoplatonic daemons as devils. Some care is required to determine when Tasso is referring to demons (*demòni*) and when to daemons (*dèmoni*). I have seen no edition that attempts to make the distinction, though Tasso's overt use of Neoplatonism argues in favor of *dèmoni* being his normal intention. I shall use “daemon” and “daemonic” when ontology is at issue, especially the question of the daemonic body, “demon” and “demonic” only when referring to Christian devils.

²² Plato 47(*Symposium* 202E-203A). “Daemonic forces thus became participants in the cosmic drama of man versus god, almost as if the daemons were the relationships, personified, of man to god” (Fletcher 61).

²³ Tasso, *Dialoghi* 48, 56, cf. 37; ed. Mazzali. The definition is based on Apuleius's treatise on the daemon of Socrates, but Tasso could have had it from Augustine 262. Baldassarri wrongly sees Tasso as “indifferent” to the distinction between angels and daemons (276n.).

immortale, si potrebbe accompagnare con coteste miste e caduche membra terrene, s'ella co 'l mezzo d'un corpo più puro e più lieve e sottile non s'accompagnasse" (13).

To understand the intimacy between Tasso's reasoning and the inquisitors' practice, we have to explore the boundary between cosmology and ontology. Torquato does not immediately accept the Messenger's notion of a necessary distinction between angels and daemons. Following in the Humanist tradition of *dignitas hominis*, he objects that daemons are ontologically superfluous. Humanity is the only necessary and logical link between the brute beasts and the angels, since humans have both a mortal body and an immortal soul. But the Messenger greets this distinction condescendingly:

— Bene argomenti; nondimeno, sì come l'anima de l'uomo è mezzo fra l'anima de' bruti e gli intelletti angelici, così anco, se l'uomo dovesse esser il perfetto mezzo tra l'una e l'altra natura, dovrebbe il suo corpo in parte al corpo de li animali e in parte a' corpi celesti assomigliarsi; ma essendo il corpo umano non men sottoposto a tutte le passioni e a tutti gli accidenti, né men corruttibile che sia quel de' bruti, ne seguita che si debba dare un corpo che fra 'l celeste e quel de' bruti sia con debita partecipazione interposto: e questo è quel de' demoni, il quale è acconcio a patire com'è il corpo de l'animale e de l'uomo, e incorruttibile come il corpo celeste, perché mai non muoiano i demoni, quantunque alcuni abbian creduto che muoian dopo lunghissimi tempi.

(*Dialoghi* 37, ed. Mazzali)

Humanity mediates only the hierarchy of created souls. The concept of demonic corporeality is therefore necessary in order to mediate the transition between the celestial bodies, which are imperishable and impassible, and terrestrial bodies, including human, which are all perishable and passible. This in-between space of the imperishable and passible is the realm of the daemonic body.

Since this dialogue mentions witches only in passing, it has had no effect on the historiography of witch-hunting. But its obsessive attention to the problem of the daemonic body explains the hidden motivation for persecuting women as witches. Tasso's argument can be made quite simple: if witches do not have sex with demons, then we have no guarantee that demons exist; thus, he implies, we have no guarantee that angels exist, and hence no guarantee of the existence of God. At first, Tasso's rehearsal of the witch-mythos seems deceptively perverse because of its exclusive concentration on sex:

. . . que' demoni che malvagi sono detti da l'ufficio loro, con le donne in quella guisa si congiungono che voi uomini solete; e perch'essi non potrebbero per sé generare, gittano il seme d'alcun uomo nel ventre de la donna, ch'è di quelle che streghe sono da voi domandate: e da sì fatti congiungimenti nascono i maghi, quale fu Merlino, che fu giudicato figliuolo del demonio.

(*Dialoghi* 55-56, ed. Mazzali)

This passage names the inquisitorial mythos that has given the whole dialogue its *telos* for nearly sixty pages: the assertion that witches were not only the apprentices but also the sexual slaves of Satan and other devils. Demonic copulation is the most bizarre aspect of inquisitorial witch-mythology, and it has been one of the most puzzling. But to understand the myth of demonic copulation is to begin answering both of the major questions about the witch-hunt: how (in what manner) inquisitors believed what they professed, and why they targeted women.

Tasso's distinction between angels and daemons provides the clue that explains why witches were predominantly conceptualized as women, for it explicates the corporeal basis of the witch's contact with the demonic world. Tasso could have read about demonic copulation in *Malleus Maleficarum* or any one of a dozen other manuals. The source is not important. What matters is how Tasso uses the concept of demonic copulation to guarantee the existence of God: he modifies a detail of inquisitorial demonology in order to make the system more logical. Inquisitors followed Thomas Aquinas and other Catholic doctors of the faith in claiming that angels and devils were both absolutely incorporeal, and could only fabricate fictive bodies by compacting air and vapors (the technical term was *inspissation*).²⁴ Tasso evidently found this explanation inadequate to make demonic copulation possible. Thus he fell back on the Neoplatonic conception of the daemon's body as both subtle and proper (or intrinsic) so as to attenuate as far as possible the *salto* between spirit and flesh.

In Tasso's system as in the inquisitors', both the daemon and the witch are less important for their spiritual qualities than for their physical, somatic ones. This appears in the deployment of one of Tasso's most significant keywords (*congiungere*) in the two passages that distinguish angels from daemons (*Dialoghi* 48-56, ed. Mazzali).²⁵ The task of angels is to bind human nature to the divinity by acting as messengers — the etymological significance of the word *angelos*, and the inspiration for Tasso's title. But the function of daemons, or at least of maleficent demons, is to copulate (*congiungersi*) with witches in the same way that male humans copulate with other women. There is a symmetry here. Both angels and demons are agents of love. But whereas demons conjoin at the corporeal level, angels perform purely spiritual mediation or conjunction, precisely because, as Tasso's Messenger states, they love in a fashion very different from that of human males ("perch' amano in modo assai diverso da l'uomo" *Dialoghi* 56, ed. Mazzali). The implication of Tasso's reasoning is that if there are no witches, that is, no women who copulate with

²⁴ "According to the scholastics, demons, like angels, were pure spirits, possessing no flesh or blood. They could, however, take on the appearance of a human or an animal body by mixing the air with various vapours from the Earth so as to create a non-corporeal or aerial body. This body, being composed of natural elements, did have a physical reality and it could perform certain bodily functions, such as dancing or the sexual act" (Levack 30). Cf. Krämer and Sprenger 21-31.

²⁵ For *congiungere*, see Stephens, "Saint Paul" 181-82.

demons, then we cannot prove the existence of the spirit-world. And indeed, the Messenger states this explicitly:

E cominciando distender gli argomenti da gli effetti maravigliosi, se sono i maghi e le streghe e li spiritati, sono i demoni; ma di quelli non si può dubitare ch'in ogni età non se ne siano ritrovati alcuni: dunque è irragionevole dubitare che si ritrovino i demoni.

(*Dialoghi* 21, ed. Mazzali)²⁶

What makes this passage simultaneously hideous and pathetic is its logical necessity within the cosmology that Tasso has been constructing. This search for the demonic (or daemonic) body is the symptom that connects Tasso's melancholy to the spiritual malaise that drove three centuries of witch-hunting in Western Europe.²⁷

The single most significant indicator of the affinity between Tasso's Neoplatonic demonology and the inquisitors' Christian one is their agreement on the importance of the witch. Although none of them admits it fully, they all imply that, if we cannot prove that witches exist, then we cannot prove the existence of daemons. Thus, we cannot prove that we live in an immanent, providential universe, or that God intervenes at all in human affairs. At the limit of this train of reasoning lies the recognition that we can never prove that God even exists, as the Cambridge Platonist Henry More recognized a century after Tasso. In a prefatory letter to Joseph Glanvill's *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681) he declared that "the confession of Witches against their own lives [is a] palpable Evidence, [along with] the miraculous feats they perform, that there are bad Spirits, which will necessarily open a door to the belief that there are good ones, and lastly that there is a God" (Kors and Peters 299). Whether the superhuman bodies that copulate with witches are fictive or intrinsic, human knowledge of the divine requires some form of such copulation. The witch is quite literally the *copula* of the cosmos.

The distortion of folk healing and sorcery by the inquisitors — that is, by the literate (and especially clerical) elite — has the same teleological thrust as

²⁶ In this section, the Messenger is using a form of argument associated with astronomy, "saving the appearances." Just as retrograde planetary motion is the effect or "appearance" to be saved by positing epicycles, so the existence of witches, sorcerers and the possessed is the effect or appearance to be saved by positing daemons. (Note however that in both astronomy and demonology, "saving the appearances" would be more correctly termed "saving the theory," since the object is to protect the theory from disproof by observed phenomena.) The Messenger is preparing a homology that will emerge only at the climax of his argumentation: the contention that daemons "move" the bodies of witches just as angelic intelligences move the heavenly bodies. However, by deciding to adopt the astronomical mode of argumentation, Torquato's Messenger is tacitly admitting the remoteness of God, and God's inaccessibility to conclusive human proof.

²⁷ Schiesari (199) reads the Messenger's body as "no more than a fictional representation of the subject" Tasso and an instantiation of castration-anxiety.

the logic of Tasso's Messenger: toward demonic copulation as an ultimate proof of immanence. This ridiculous, degrading, and pathetic fiction epitomizes the profound difference between the inquisitorial witch-mythos and that of the illiterate masses. Folk culture depended on the notion of the witch's *maleficium* or evil spell. Left to themselves, the folk were clearly interested in social control, for they had two motivations for believing in maleficent magic. First, it explained disorder in everyday life, by making a visible human agent responsible for the mysterious death of cows, crops, babies or libido. Second, it justified the expulsion of troublesome, non-conforming persons from the midst of the community.²⁸ The folk view of *maleficium* may have been essentially animistic at least part of the time; that is, spirits of some sort may have been involved. But those spirits were not originally defined as demons or devils.

In contrast to witch-accusers among the populace, the inquisitors showed little concern for social control: allegations of harm caused by the defendants' *maleficia* were important to inquisitors almost solely as evidence of supposed contact with Satan. They defined this Satanic commerce as the basis of all *maleficium*. Historians of witch-hunting define the demonic pact — a formal agreement that bound over the witch's soul to the Devil in exchange for the means of working *maleficia* — as the core element of the inquisitorial witch-mythos. Indeed, proof of actual *maleficium* was almost never required for conviction, whereas proof of a demonic pact always was. Furthermore, some inquisitors openly declared that if it could be proved a person had committed no *maleficium*, she should nonetheless die if she had confessed to a making pact with the Devil.²⁹

As regards the overt legalistic foundation for acquiring conviction, historians are right to identify the demonic pact as absolutely determinant. Yet the core symptom of the pathology behind the witch-hunt was corporeal, not spiritual: the inquisitors' notion that witches regularly copulated with devils, including with Satan himself.³⁰ For reasons that are undoubtedly complex, the inquisitorial mentality considered penetration and insemination as the ultimate experience of corporeal reality. Although the Devil's lack of a real body within Scholastic ontology should have been problematic, inquisitors maintained that both angels and devils could fabricate fictive bodies. Thus devils (though not angels) could have sex with women and even impregnate them with semen "stolen" from human males. This truly fictional body filled the gap that threatened to prove a cosmic order of transcendence and *salto* rather than

²⁸ Rosen, Lamer, Macfarlane and Thomas.

²⁹ Martin Luther opined that witches "should be burnt even if they did no harm, merely for making a pact with the Devil" while Benedict Carpzov in 1635 "maintained that even those who merely believed that they had been at the sabbat should be executed, for the belief implied the will" (Trevor-Roper 137, 159).

³⁰ By 1486 it was possible to claim that "it is common to all of them [witches] to practise carnal copulation with devils" (Krämer and Sprenger 99).

immanence and *salita*. A *cui bono* analysis reveals the entire scenario of demonic copulation as an obsession that could appeal only to the inquisitors, for women who confessed to it also "admitted" that the experience had been painful and unpleasant. The pain and joylessness of the Devil's sex, like the insipidity or inedibility of the food he offered, and the evanescence of his other rewards, was finally nothing more than a sop to the inquisitors' consciences, which would not allow them to predicate positive benefits of human contact with the Devil. Yet that contact was necessary, and in quantity, to the inquisitors' metaphysical well-being. Inquisitors overtly conceptualized this copulation in the same way that peasants regarded *maleficium* as a fearsome invasion of chaos and disorder. But at a deeper level it served as a reassuring sign of the ultimate order, comprehensibility, and providentiality of the universe.

Witch-hunting as legalized mass murder was thus primarily the expression of a cosmology, or rather, of a profound shift in cosmologies. As the witch-hunt progressed, other, more immediate and concrete evidence of corporeal contact between women and demons was required: prominent scars and birthmarks that could be explained as the Devil's "mark" or signature, moles and wens that could be identified as "witch's tits," whence a devil, incarnated in the form of a "familiar" pet, supposedly suckled blood from the witch. The final desperate stage of the witch-hunt saw inquisitors prosecuting witches for causing devils to possess innocent victims (as at Loudun and Salem). Thus the inquisitor witnessed a wedding of flesh and spirit before his own eyes, in a form of contact more intimate even than sex. But, as the Devil himself was to tell another hallucinating intellectual exactly three centuries after Torquato: "Spiritualists . . . think they're serving faith because devils show their little horns to them from the other world. 'This,' they say, 'is a material proof, so to speak, that the other world exists.' The other world and material proofs, la-di-da! And, after all, who knows whether proof of the devil is also a proof of God?" (Dostoevsky 636-37). Indeed, once witches were regularly charged with causing possession, the hunt soon collapsed.³¹ Once the inquisitor had witnessed the devil enflesh himself at human command, the demonic had reached its outer limit of tangibility. On the other side was literally nothing: Christians had to confront their unacknowledged skepticism, and either embrace it (as Sadduceeism, deism, etc.) or recast it as Christian skepticism, as some form of negative theology about a transcendent God.

Tasso intuited the homology and interdependence between the witch's demonic copulation and the hypostatic union of the Incarnation. Demonology and Christianity are a perilous mix, as the inquisitors demonstrate; the crypto-Platonic ontology behind any systematic Christian demonology threatens the uniqueness of Christ as both *mezzo* and *mediatore*. In comparison with a construct like the witch's demonic copulation, the doctrine of the Incarnation

³¹ Klaitis 111, 104. Among others, Krämer and Sprenger had anticipated this outbreak (128-34).

still presents a universe of *salto*, rather than *salita*: the single hypostasis whereby humanity and divinity are conjoined in Christ as their sole and sufficient mean term (*mezzo*) seems abrupt and even crude.³² And it is very distant in history.

Both Christianity and Neoplatonic demonology condemn Manichaeism and other dualistic religions for expressing the fear that God is inaccessible to creatures of flesh. Both attempt to bridge the gap or *salto* between flesh and spirit by positing a daemonic body that is a union of opposites, a spiritual body or embodied spirit. But as mean or *mezzo* the daemonic body betrays a yearning for the infinitely divisible: "Coming from the term that means 'to divide,' *daemon* implies an endless series of divisions of all important aspects of the world into separate elements for study and control" (Fletcher 59). The divisions can be comforting only insofar as they refute the very notion of division, by becoming infinitely gradated.

Thus, even if it obscures its Neoplatonic assumptions, a *systematic* Christian demonology cannot avoid falling into dualism through the very exercise of gradualism, and thence attributing determinative importance to Satan. Demonology betrays the fear of God's inaccessibility, for if there are necessary *ontological* mean-terms between humanity and divinity, then without Satan there is no humanly understandable proof of God's existence. In this sense, demonology replaces Christ with Satan as the ultimate guarantor of God's existence and accessibility. Just as the Neoplatonic daemon displaced Man as the *mezzo* between angel and beast, so Satan displaces Christ as the *mezzo* between humanity and divinity, and the witch displaces the Blessed Virgin as the vessel of that mediation. Thus, paradoxically, the more systematic a Christian demonology, the less it can dare openly to assert the ultimate importance of Satan. On the moral plane, it must go on wrestling with the conundrums of theodicy, continually seeking to prove that God both permits and frustrates evil. Likewise, on the ontological plane it must construct the category of witches for proof of immanence; yet although this proof is indispensable, it must be treated with abhorrence and loathing, rather than reverence and gratitude.

Tasso's misogyny cannot be denied, and that of the inquisitors was extreme; but in neither case was misogyny a simple hatred or fear of women. Instead, I suspect that it is the obverse of some more positive tendencies that Carolyn Bynum examined in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*. It appears that the female body became the preferred medium for the demonstration of incarnational doctrines by the thirteenth century, and Bynum argues that Western Christianity not only

32 "... è necessario che tra Iddio e l'uomo si ponga alcun mezzo, o più tosto molti, perciocché, se tra Iddio e l'uomo fosse un solo mezzo, una sola sarebbe la specie intelligibile; ma sono molti, perciocché non debbono essere in minor numero de le sensibili, ma più tosto in maggiore, conciosiacosa che le intelligibili non sono in tempo come le sensibili, ma in eternità, e l'eccellenza de l'eternità ricerca che in lei siano più specie e più perfette che nel tempo" (*Dialoghi* 35-36. Ed. Mazzali)

depreciated, but also honored women by assigning them a status as representatives of "the carnal condition" and of "the experience of fleshliness in its consummate form, femaleness." Male fascination with female mystics and martyrs made women's bodies

vehicles of men's speech; men defined themselves through the flesh they evoked, in the case of hagiographers, or beheld and consecrated, in the case of the confessors who accompanied most living saints and acted as witnesses and praise-singers. . . . Bynum's point is that women speak through their own bodies, their own 'suffering and generativity,' rooted in biological metaphors like birthing and nursing, to which the female sex has a prior claim; female somatic presence abolishes the intermediary stage men occupy, which makes them need women to speak through, to think with. (Warner 16)³³

Recall Tasso's Messenger's rejection of the Humanistic *topos* of *dignitas hominis*: the idea that Man — i.e., the idealized male — is the hinge of the universe. Taken in himself, the idealized male of the Humanist tradition is marginal, left outside the great chain of being, in a sense far different and far less comforting than the one the elder Pico intended when he made that same assertion. *Dignitas hominis* was intended to isolate Man in a positive sense as the microcosm; but by denying him a single, static essence like the ones assigned to women and daemons, the humanistic ideal of human dignity isolated the ideal male in a negative sense as well, cutting him off from the system of immanence. The male human alone cannot bridge the gap between brute flesh and angelic spirit.³⁴ Such a bridge must be formed by the conjunction of woman — the fleshly body in its purest form, chemically speaking — and a daemonic body, which is simultaneously the subtlest form of corporeality and the lowest form of the suprahuman. Woman and daemon represent, in slightly different degrees, the most corporeal "isotope" of spirit. Thus one outlet of the male need to "speak through" and "think with" women's bodies was the inquisitors' ventriloquism, their quite literal speaking through and thinking with the bellies of women.

³³ Quoted from Warner 16. See also Rubin 168-69. One may certainly object that if women, especially witches, were being honored for their presumed more fleshly condition, such honor is not enviable.

³⁴ Pico della Mirandola 3-8. The Messenger's is a profoundly anti-Humanist view of the universe: man is not Pico's chameleon; rather, the daemons are. But to the extent that both Humanists and witch-hunters equated femaleness with passivity and corporeality, the two views have an uneasy resemblance. Women cannot act out their transformation into something superhuman. They can only submit to the other possibility Pico envisioned — brutish degradation — by submitting to the sexual violence of daemons. But human males of the sort Pico envisioned do not fit into the system at all. Krämer and Sprenger theorize a distinction between female witches who fornicate with incubi and males who do so with succubi: ". . . it does not appear that men thus devilishly fornicate with the same full degree of culpability; for men, being by nature intellectually stronger than women, are more apt to abhor such practices" (164).

For Tasso as for inquisitors, the ostensible imperative of witch-hunting, "Cherchez la femme," hid the deeper objective that drove the hunt: "Cherchez le diable." Tasso enunciated it in a kind of syllogism: "if witches, then daemons, then immanence, [then God]." This syllogism is half a palindrome; it is a rationalist's anagram of the fideist's syllogism, "God, thus immanence, hence demons, thus witches." Superficially, there is a great methodological difference between Tasso's approach to demonology and that of the inquisitors. Whereas Tasso used language to seek the invisible daemonic body, the inquisitors did so by breaking and burning the bodies of real human beings. But in fact, when they tortured witches, inquisitors were enacting Tasso's syllogism, attempting to prove it by experimentation: "if this is a witch, then a demon exists, thus immanence is possible, hence God may exist and be accessible. But — and this is a Scholastic 'but,' which means 'my point is proved' — this *is* a witch."³⁵ By always extracting the same eyewitness account ("confession") of the Devil's immanence, the inquisitors were expressing the unconscious of their professed purpose. Their deep goal was not the elimination of demonic and Satanic activity, but the proof that it existed. Their conscious motto was Jesus' "Vade Satana" but its unconscious form was Faustus's "Veni, veni Mephistophile."³⁶

This is the deepest sense in which the inquisitors were projecting their own psychology onto the witches. In reality inquisitors were performing the very crime of which they accused the witches: they were conjuring the presence of the Devil. While some witches supposedly used figurative bodies to give instructions to devils (by perforating and burning waxen dolls or desecrating the Eucharistic host), inquisitors in effect tried to summon devils by violating the bodies of real people. From a functionalist point of view, the witch's death ensured the finality and integrity of the inquisitor's projection, for it prevented her from retracting or emending the ontological demonstration they had composed together and committed to the authenticating notary's pen.³⁷ Despite her prized status as the Devil's accuser, the witch had to be killed as his accomplice, ostensibly to atone for her sin in summoning him; but at an unconscious level she assumed and atoned for the inquisitor's sin, the invocation of Satan.

The deep purpose of the witch-hunt was also unconscious for the simple reason that it was unacknowledged. There was only one question that the inquisitors' activity precluded them from asking out loud, and that was the only question that gave meaning to what they were doing. To paraphrase a riddle of

³⁵ This is "the typical pattern of thinking of Western rationalism, the *modus ponens*: 'if p then q; but p: therefore q'" (Eco 27).

³⁶ Matthew 4.10; Marlowe 26 (5.29).

³⁷ As many historians have documented, recantations were a serious problem, for once torture ended, many defendants tried to vindicate their own versions of events. Often they were tortured again or threatened with such penalties as being burned alive rather than strangled at the last moment if they did not withdraw their recantations.

Borges about riddles: "in an experiment whose ultimate purpose is to prove the existence of the Devil, what is the only forbidden question? Answer: 'Does the Devil exist?'"³⁸ To my knowledge, no inquisitor ever enunciated this deep objective in any overt or systematic way. From the inquisitors' point of view, to admit they were seeking contact, however indirect, with Satan would have been to confess blasphemy and heresy, the same rationalist skepticism — ultimately an unwilling atheism — that plagued Tasso. To have done so would have been to admit that they were the real criminals of the "witch craze."

To enunciate such doubt linguistically with any degree of safety seems to have called for special forms of immunity, which were unavailable to the clerical elite. One was madness, and Tasso was further protected by the physiological symptomology of melancholia. He reduced the institutional logic of witch-hunting to a syllogism of devastating simplicity, which reveals how early modern Christianity, both Protestant and Catholic, had painted itself into an epistemological corner. The inquisitorial subculture of literate Western Christianity had been led by its most exquisite instruments and exercises to conclude — in its collective or institutional unconscious — that the existence of the witch was the only remaining guarantee of the existence of God. It was thus not superstition and credulity that led inquisitors to persecute witches, but the skepticism engendered by their exercise of reason and logic to test the very tenets of Christianity. As the mouthpiece of inquisitorial logic, Tasso's *Messenger* also spoke aloud its great unconscious premise, and illuminated the depths of an anguish that the Counter-Reformation orthodoxy of *Gerusalemme liberata* could not assuage.

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³⁸ "'In a riddle whose answer is chess, what is the only prohibited word?' I thought a moment and replied, 'The word *chess*'" (Borges 27).

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La scrittura epico-cavalleresca al femminile: Moderata Fonte e *Tredici canti del Floridoro*

"O decus Italiae virgo"
(Virgilio, *Aeneid* 11:508)

Quando si pensa al romanzo cavalleresco si pensa di solito a una narrativa tipicamente maschile: quella di un eroe in cerca delle proprie origini e in movimento verso il raggiungimento di un destino che coincide con la creazione della dinastia che il poeta che canta le sue gesta sta servendo. È vero naturalmente che le donne hanno abitato le pagine del genere fin dall'inizio e che era solo prendendone atto che Ludovico Ariosto aveva equamente spartito le parti nella prima ottava del suo *Orlando furioso* (1532): "Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori,/ le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto."¹ Leggendo questi versi con lo zodiaco in mente, Tommaso Campanella avrebbe poi asserito che Ariosto non aveva molta scelta; il suo era, dopo tutto, il secolo delle donne: "invero egli fu al tempo del secolo femminile: però cominciò da 'le donne' e le difende quanto può".² Sotto il triangolo del Toro e col transito del sole in segno femminile, Campanella scriverà in *Articoli prophetales*, le donne dominano ("et feminae, quoniam absis Solis in femineum transivit signum, dominium acceperunt") in buona compagnia con gli effeminati ("dominatus feminarum vel effeminatorum in vestibus variis").³

Con buona pace di Campanella, le cose sembra siano andate in maniera più rassicurante per gli uomini in quel periodo perché le donne, come al solito, hanno continuato a non avere molto spazio nella Storia scritta con la lettera maiuscola anche se, è vero, sono entrate nella letteratura. Ma una cosa è essere l'io dell'enunciato, non importa quanto indispensabile, di un testo, e una cosa è essere l'io dell'enunciazione. E per quel che riguarda il ruolo delle donne come autrici di romanzi cavallereschi non fa nemmeno senso parlare di marginalità femminile: come la produzione libraria e i cataloghi di biblioteca testimoniano, le donne semplicemente in questo campo non hanno fatto numero né hanno avuto peso: a tutt'oggi, che io sappia, l'interesse per la loro produzione è, *de facto*, zero.

¹ Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, I, ottava 1. In seguito citato come *OF* in parentesi nel testo.

² Tommaso Campanella, "Poetica," in *Tutte le opere*, a c. di L. Firpo. Vol. 1, Milano, Mondadori, 1954, p. 337.

³ Pp. 273 e 269. Cfr. Lina Bolzoni, "Campanella e le donne: fascino e negazione della differenza," *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989), 193-206, pp. 209-10.

Eppure, se Ariosto e Tasso potevano cantare di donne e armi mentre se ne stavano seduti tranquilli a tavolino a Palazzo Este, non c'è ragione di pensare che le donne non avessero potuto fare altrettanto, magari rimuginando versi mentre, come vuole l'iconografia, erano occupate a filare. Se Ariosto aveva avuto 113 edizioni del suo *Furioso* in quaranta anni (1540–80),⁴ si poteva credere che la sua formula era non magica, ma copiabile, e quindi aperta anche a genii occasionali. Già nel Seicento, Luca Pastrovinchi, in un sonetto in lode di Isabella Andreini, aveva messo in chiaro che non c'era niente di strano per le donne "Il cantar l'armi e i gloriosi eroi,/ Ch'alto è lo spirito, se imbecille il sesso."⁵ Ma c'è una relazione più intima, sorprendentemente, che questo sesso sembra aver avuto con il romanzo cavalleresco. In una lettera del 1559 a Bernardo Tasso, Sperone Speroni, chiamando in causa come al solito le donne per motivi che non hanno assolutamente niente a che fare con loro, aveva paragonato la narrativa inventata dall'Ariosto a una donna con parti del corpo non ben troppo formate ma al tempo stesso piacevoli: "si può agguagliare a una donna che ha poche parti che belle siano; solamente ha un non so che onde ella piaccia alla gente."⁶ Chi meglio delle donne allora avrebbe potuto descrivere questo "non so che" che tanto entusiasmava il pubblico, questa deformità eccitante, visto che erano loro a incarnare lo specifico femminile? Se il romanzo cavalleresco era costituito come il corpo delle donne e non solo costruito sul corpo delle donne, c'era senz'altro qualcosa che le donne, per esperienza personale, avrebbero potuto contribuire alla sua mitologia.

A spulciare bene, c'è un numero sorprendente di scrittrici di romanzi cavallereschi che hanno pubblicato negli anni immediatamente successivi al successo strepitoso del *Furioso*. Nel 1551, per esempio, Laura Terracina dava alle stampe, a Venezia, il *Discorso sopra il principio di tutti i canti dell'Orlando furioso*, un testo ripubblicato poi quattordici volte nei prossimi novanta anni e perfino menzionato come sostitutivo di quello dell'Ariosto, per la sua moralità, da alcuni insegnanti di Venezia nel 1587. Il maestro Ascanius Fontana, per esempio, annotava che "quelli che vogliono imparar leggere d'ottava rima li faccio imparar el libro del Terrazina"; da parte sua Alexius Salto ammetteva che anche lui usava questa allegorizzazione in sostituzione del testo originale nel suo programma accademico ("il Terracina che fa [l'allegoria] sopra tutti i primi canti del *Furioso*").⁷ Che adesso ambedue questi maestri abbiano oscurato il sesso della

⁴ Si veda Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic. The Canonization of the Orlando furioso*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1991, p. 10. Sul successo del genere cavalleresco si veda Marina Beer, "Nella biblioteca di Don Chisciotte", in *Romanzi di cavalleria. Il Furioso e il romanzo italiano nel primo Cinquecento*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1987, pp. 207–65.

⁵ Citato in Antonio Belloni, *Il poema epico e mitologico*, Milano, Vallardi, 1912, p. 271.

⁶ "Risposta dello Sperone" in *Delle lettere di M. Bernardo Tasso*, vol. 3, p. 160. Il Tasso avrebbe poi definito il capolavoro dell'Ariosto un "animal d'incerta natura" (*Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata*), 1585).

⁷ In Vittorio Baldo, *Alunni, maestri e scuole in Venezia alla fine del XVI secolo*, Como, New Press,

persona che ha scritto il libro che loro avevano personalmente scelto di adottare o che, non sapendolo, naturalmente abbiano assunto che chiunque scriva un testo letterario di una certa consistenza sia un uomo non fa di certo meraviglia.

Nel 1560 usciva a Venezia *Il Meschino detto il Guerrino* di Tullia d'Aragona (ripubblicato poi nel 1594), una rielaborazione in 36 canti del *Guerin Meschino*, ma con uno sviluppo più morale. Consia del fatto che c'erano troppi "libri di battaglia" pieni di episodi scabrosi che le donne evitavano, o che si faceva in modo evitassero, la d'Aragona dichiarava di voler scrivere un testo appropriato per chiunque, suore, vedove e adolescenti incluse, che preferiva scriverlo in versi e che avrebbe considerato ambiti diversi, incluso quello spagnolo.⁸

Qualche anno dopo era Moderata Fonte, pseudonimo di Modesta Pozzo, a seguire la d'Aragona con un testo pubblicato a Venezia nel 1581. I *Tredici canti del Floridoro* è un romanzo cavalleresco che ha molto di ariostesco e, se c'è Tasso, c'è solo Bernardo.⁹ È sulla Fonte che mi concentrerò nelle prossime pagine per entrare nel genere epico-cavalleresco attraverso un discorso di "genere" (maschile/femminile); il mio scopo è quello di offrire una chiave di lettura, per così dire in controluce, di una produzione ipercodificata e di esaminarne le modalità in un discorso che intendo leggere come sessuato.

L'elenco, in ogni caso, non finisce qui. Nel 1606 Margherita Sarocchi pubblicava a Roma la *Scarderbeide*, "poema eroico" sulle lotte contro i Turchi di Giorgio Castriotto, detto lo Scarderbeg. Titolare di un cenacolo che anche Galileo frequentava, la Sarocchi faceva uscire una prima edizione del testo in nove canti con un riassunto del tredicesimo e parte del quattordicesimo; l'edizione definitiva del 1623 offriva 23 canti.¹⁰

Laura Marinelli si presentava nel 1635 a Venezia con *L'Enrico, ovvero Bisanzio acquistato*, dove è evidente che le nuove teorie critiche hanno fatto

1977, p. 73. Rimando anche a Paul Grendler, "Chivalric Romances in the Italian Renaissance", *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 10 (1988), 59-102.

⁸ "Conoscendo quanto le donne e gli uomini sien vaghi di leggere e d'ascoltare cose piacevoli, andai per qualche tempo ricercando quasi tutti i libri d'istorie e di poesie che avesse la nostra lingua . . . con questa mia saldissima intenzione di trovar qualche libro di vaga e dilettevole lezione, ove non fosser cose disoneste e brutte" (in "Prefazione" a *Il Meschino detto il Guerrino*. D'Aragona afferma di aver trovato il suo testo nella tradizione spagnola, ma in realtà la tradizione era francese, poi toscanzizzata da Andrea da Barberino in *Guerin Meschino* (1473).

⁹ Il titolo completo è *Tredici Canti del Floridoro* / Alli sereniss. Gran Duca, et / Grand Duchessa di Thoscana / In Venetia, MDLXXXI. Il testo è preceduto da due sonetti della Fonte, uno in onore del granduca Francesco de' Medici e l'altro della granduchessa Bianca Capello, e da tre sonetti scritti per lei rispettivamente da Cesare Simonetti, Bartolomeo Malombra e Gio. Nicolò Dogliani. Ogni canto è inoltre preceduto da una ottava, chiamata "Argomento", che ne riassume il contenuto.

¹⁰ Sulla Sarocchi (o Sarrocchi) Birago si veda Gian Ludovico Masetti Zannini, *Motivi storici della educazione femminile. Scienza, lavoro, giochi*, Napoli, D'Auria, 1982, pp. 39-44; A. Favaro, "Amici e corrispondenti di Galileo, I, Margherita Sarocchi," in *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 5 (1893-94), pp. 555-56; e Antonio Belloni, *Storia letteraria d'Italia. Il Seicento*, Milano, Vallardi, 1929, pp. 202-03.

strada. La prefazione assicurava i lettori che l'argomento dell'*Enrico* era cristiano (tratta in 27 canti di imprese connesse alla quarta crociata e all'eroismo del doge Enrico Dandolo), l'eroe principale era unico e l'azione era omogenea, il tutto, quindi, alla moda del Tasso. Come nel caso della d'Aragona, lo svolgimento era volutamente tenuto dentro parametri morali.¹¹ Cinque anni dopo a Firenze, nel 1640, Barbara Albizzi-Tagliamochi optava per una continuazione dell'*Eneide* in *Ascanio errante*.¹² Di tutti questi lavori solo due, il *Meschino* della d'Aragona e l'*Enrico* della Marinelli, sono stati ripubblicati nell'Ottocento nella prestigiosa collana "Il Parnaso italiano"; gli altri attendono forse improbabili riscoperte.¹³

Mi sono soffermata su questa rassegna non tanto per dimostrare che c'è materiale per una sistemazione storiografica delle scrittrici nell'ambito della tradizione cavalleresca, ma per registrare la mia meraviglia a trovarne tante.¹⁴

¹¹ Scrive Belloni: "dal poema della Marinella è affatto esclusa la parte sensuale e lasciva, ma non per ciò vi manca l'elemento patetico e sentimentale in cui anzi riuscì a fare della buona poesia" (*Il poema epico*, op. cit., p. 271). Di Belloni si veda anche *Gli epigoni della "Gerusalemme liberata"*, Padova, Draghi, 1893, pp. 285-98.

¹² L'unico accenno al testo della Albizzi-Tagliamochi è in Leopoldo Ferri, *Biblioteca femminile italiana*, Padova, Crescini, 1812, p. 330.

¹³ Sebbene questa sia, che io sappia, l'unica lista di romanzi cavallereschi scritti da donne, è, a dir poco, incompleta. Tanto per cominciare è ristretta a romanzi effettivamente cavallereschi, anche se l'elenco potrebbe includere testi pubblicati nel periodo come "eroici", quali alcuni dei poemi epico-religiosi in ottava rima di Lucrezia Marinelli, per esempio *La colomba sacra* (Venezia, 1595) sul martirio di Santa Colomba, in quattro canti, e *Amore innamorato ed impazzato* (Venezia, 1587, 1618) in dieci canti con echi di Ariosto e Poliziano; e Maddalena Salvetti Acciajoli, *Davide perseguitato* (Firenze, 1611) in soli tre canti per intervenuta morte dell'autrice. Sulla poesia epico-religiosa in ottava rima con sviluppo eroico e romanzesco, un sottogenere molto praticato, soprattutto nel Seicento, si veda Belloni, pp. 229-34. Ci sono inoltre i brevi *Argomenti* di Maddalena Campiglia che accompagnano *Il Fidamante* di Curzio Gonzaga (pubblicato originariamente a Mantova nel 1582 e ristampato con l'aggiunta degli "Argomenti" a Venezia nel 1591). Il testo imita sia il *Furioso* dell'Ariosto che la *Liberata* e il *Rinaldo* del Tasso e fa discendere la famiglia Gonzaga dal cavaliere troiano Fidamante. Si veda Belloni, *Storia d'Italia*, op. cit., pp. 235-35, e *Il poema epico e mitologico*, op. cit., che però non cita la Campiglia. Per il censimento, mi sono servita dei seguenti repertori: Marina Beer, "Appendice II", in op. cit., pp. 327-89; Antonio Belloni, "Il fallimento dell'ideale eroico", in *Storia d'Italia*, op. cit., pp. 181-238; Salvatore Bongi, *Annali di Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari*, Roma, Presso i Principali Librai, 1890; Alessandro Cutolo, *I romanzi cavallereschi in prosa e in rima del Fondo Castiglioni presso la Biblioteca Braidense di Milano*, Milano, Hoepli, 1944; Pietro Leopoldo Ferri, op. cit.; Giuseppina Fumagalli, *La fortuna dell'"Orlando furioso" in Italia nel secolo XVI*, Ferrara, Zuffi, 1912; Gaetano Melzi, "Bibliografia dei romanzi e dei poemi romanzeschi d'Italia", in Giulio Ferrario, *Storia ed analisi dei romanzi di cavalleria*, Vol. IV, Milano, Ferrario, 1829; Gaetano Melzi e Gian Paolo Tosi, *Bibliografia dei romanzi di cavalleria in versi e in prosa italiani*, Milano, Daelli, 1865; e Marina Zancan et al., "Appendice III", in *Nel cerchio della luna. Figure di donna in alcuni testi del XVI secolo*, a c. di Marina Zancan, Venezia, Marsilio 1983, pp. 254-64. Per un esempio "tardo" di scrittura femminile cavalleresca vale la pena di citare il caso di Luisa Bergalli, dirigente insieme con il marito del teatro veneziano S. Angelo, che ha scritto *La Bradamante*, Venezia, presso Pietro Bassaglia, 1747.

¹⁴ Che ci sia stato un numero considerevole di scrittrici nel Rinascimento è diventato un cliché. Ma l'interesse per questa presenza si è limitato quasi esclusivamente alla poesia petrarchesca. È

Che cosa tutto sommato può offrire alle donne un genere letterario così legato all'immaginario maschile, un genere così pieno di tornei, battaglie, mostri marini, parate militari, elenchi genealogici e letture encomiastiche e selettive di fatti più che mai cruenti? E come se la sbrigano le donne con immagini fantasmizzate del loro, con eroine in armatura nella cui femminilità non potrebbero specchiarsi e con bionde vergini che non hanno niente addosso che il tipo di femminilità che le rende preda di rampanti desideri maschili?

Nelle prossime pagine cercherò di mettere a fuoco il problema e offrire qualche ipotesi. Comincio intanto con le tre ragioni per le quali le scrittrici, secondo me, sarebbero potuto essere attratte dal romanzo cavalleresco. Prima di tutto, a chiunque studi il sedicesimo secolo appare evidente che c'è un numero più che consistente di letterate che hanno scritto e pubblicato in questo periodo. La maggior parte di queste donne si è cimentata con la poesia petrarchesca, in parte perché le forme "antologia" e "tempio" (raccolta celebrativa in onore di una persona viva o morta) erano venute di moda, e quindi era relativamente più facile avere sonetti pubblicati, e in parte perché si è sempre pensato che l'amore fosse un soggetto di cui le donne potessero saperne a sufficienza. Ma scrivere di sentimenti ed affetti, come è stato già osservato, non era cosa da poco per letterate: il *topos* semplicemente non era traducibile quando le posizioni di soggetto e oggetto venivano a essere scambiate.¹⁵ Parlare d'amore a una persona libidinalmente indifferente alle pene di chi scrive e, come risultato, appunto dando particolari della necessaria crudeltà dell'essere amato, narcisisticamente autocrearsi come artista — la traiettoria tipica dei sonetti di Petrarca — non funziona quando il genere dei due interlocutori cambia. Una donna poteva solo perdere la sua reputazione nel dichiararsi pubblicamente a un uomo dentro e fuori il testo poetico; il "no" implicito del rispondente era, in ogni caso, culturalmente improponibile. La mia ipotesi è che la poesia cavalleresca, proprio per la sua forma più narrativa e estesa, offrisse invece alle donne un'alternativa interessante: la possibilità di scrivere d'amore senza sentirsi identificate con i travagli amorosi delle varie creazioni femminili, di legittimare, per così dire, un io "altro" senza avere la propria sessualità inopportunamente chiamata in causa.

La seconda ragione è che era quasi impossibile non desiderare di partecipare a

soltanto negli ultimi anni che la scrittura delle donne nel campo della trattatistica, per esempio, è diventata soggetto di studio, come si può vedere chiaramente nelle prossime pagine dalla bibliografia che accompagna *Il merito delle donne*; la scoperta di commedie e farse conventuali, inoltre, un genere che Elissa Weaver sta lentamente riportando alla luce, ha rivelato una scrittura teatrale femminile di cui fino a poco tempo fa non si sapeva niente. Si veda la sua recente edizione di Beatrice del Sera, *Amor di virtù*, Ravenna, Longo, 1990. Così nel campo della letteratura cavalleresca c'è molto da fare e recuperare i nomi è solo il primo passo.

¹⁵ Si veda, per esempio, Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros. Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1990; e Luciana Borsetto, "Narciso ed Eco. Figura e scrittura nella lirica femminile del Cinquecento: esemplificazioni ed appunti", in *Nel cerchio della luna*, op. cit., pp. 171-233. Per il successo del formato antologico, rimando a Amedeo Quondam, *Petrarchismo mediato*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1974.

questo filone di produzione perché la poesia cavalleresca non era soltanto popolare, continuamente ristampata, serializzata, emendata, contraffatta e rielaborata, ma anche pubblicabile a poco costo. Alcuni editori, come Zoppino e Tramezzino a Venezia, sfornavano "romanze" a tutto spiano; il formato di questi libri era minuscolo, di solito stampato non in quarto ma in sedicesimo; e la tecnica tipografica prevedeva che fossero in doppia colonna, quindi, in ultima analisi, con poco spreco di pagine. Secondo Marina Beer c'erano non meno di 500.000 copie di romanzi cavallereschi (esclusi i capolavori!) in circolazione in Italia tra il 1470 e il 1600, con circa 600 titoli pubblicati da 21 case editrici.¹⁶ Il *Furioso*, per esempio, aveva venduto più di 25.000 copie, attestandosi a livelli più alti del Vangelo. In Spagna il re Filippo II aveva emesso un decreto reale nel 1543 che proibiva di esportare "romanze" nel nuovo mondo: c'era già abbastanza febbre in quello vecchio.¹⁷ La popolarità di questi testi si estendeva a tutti i livelli sociali, corti incluse; essi erano letti da nobili, borghesi, soldati, popolani, e perfino illetterati che li sentivano recitati nelle piazze e nelle osterie o musicalmente modulati "su la ribeca o su 'l gravicembalo", come c'informa Giuseppe Malatesta (147).¹⁸ Donne di tutte le condizioni li conoscevano ("ma diciam pure delle inculte villanelle & delle rozze pastorelle" dai "rustici accenti", 138) e spesso li usavano in conversazioni e giochi di corte e di società.¹⁹ I volumi erano tanto manipolati che molti esemplari non ci sono pervenuti perché letteralmente ridotti a pezzi. Malatesta scrive umoristicamente della sua meraviglia a vedersi presentato il conto una sera per una sua lettura fortuita del *Furioso* nella locanda in cui si era fermato aspettando che spiovesse. In tali condizioni, chi non sarebbe stato interessato a scrivere romanzi cavallereschi, qualunque fosse il bagaglio ideologico che essi si portavano dietro nel quadro narrativo?

La mia terza ipotesi è che anche se il genere è tipicamente maschile nel senso che il protagonista principale è di necessità un eroe teleologicamente in movimento verso un destino dinastico e procreativo, non è detto che gli uomini

¹⁶ È con i romanzi cavallereschi che si può cominciare a parlare di *bestseller*: l'*Innamorato* di Matteo Maria Boiardo fu stampato in 228 copie nell'edizione del 1484, ma già in 1250 in quella del 1495; la prima edizione del *Furioso*, a testimoniare l'impatto del genere sul pubblico, venne fatta direttamente uscire in circa 2000 esemplari (tra i 1200 e i 3000). Si veda Beer, p. 228. Sulla fortuna del *Furioso* rimando anche a Fumagalli. Naturalmente la popolarità e la facilità di stampa dei romanzi cavallereschi aveva anche il suo lato negativo: molti di questi testi abbondano di errori tipografici. Sui vari tipi di libri popolari nel Rinascimento, si veda Paul Grendler, "Form and Function in Italian Renaissance Popular Books", *Renaissance Quarterly* 46.3 (1993), 451-85.

¹⁷ Si veda Piero Di Nepi, "Dal 'romanzo' al poema eroico. II", *Il Veltro* 22 (1978), 95-99.

¹⁸ Giuseppe Malatesta, *Dialogo della nuova poesia, ovvero le difese del "Furioso"*, Verona, Sebastiano delle Donne, 1589.

¹⁹ Racconta Ugurgieri Azzolini: "Porzia Pecci nobil senese fu d'ingegno elevatissimo, e si diletto di belle lettere, ed essendo al suo tempo usciti fuori i libri di Amadis di Gaula, ella se ne fece pratichissima, sì che occorrendogli alcuna occasione di veglie e di giuochi di spirito, molto se ne prevaleva" (*Le pompe sanesi*, II, p. 395, citato in Masetti Zannini, p. 105).

meglio delle donne possano descrivere azioni eroiche. Nei suoi *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico*, Tasso aveva enumerato quelli che erano secondo lui gli argomenti tipici dell'epica:

quasi in un picciolo mondo, qui si leggano ordinanze d'esserciti, qui battaglie terrestre e navali, qui espugnazioni di città, scaramucce e duelli, qui giostre, qui descrizioni di fame e di sete, qui tempeste, qui incendi, qui prodigii; là si trovino concilii celesti ed infernali, là si veggiano sedizioni, là discordie, là errori, là venture, là incanti, là opere di crudeltà, di audacia, di cortesia, di generosità; là avvenimenti d'amore, or felici or infelici, or lieti or compassionevoli.²⁰

Adesso si è più volte notato che le descrizioni di duelli in Tasso sono realistiche, frutto non tanto di un'esperienza personale che, in ogni caso, non era aperta alle donne, quanto, sorprendentemente, di una libresca.²¹ Per motivi noti, è anche possibile che Tasso possa avere avuto esperienza parapersonale di "concilii celesti e infernali", ma che avesse partecipato a battaglie per terra e per mare, e che perciò potesse descrivere queste cose meglio delle donne, è da escludere.

Se Tasso aveva potuto supplire alle sue conoscenze con libri sul soggetto, era evidente che anche le donne avrebbero potuto farsi autodidatte e educarsi sulle leggi dell'onore e della tenzone. Manuali su duelli e scienza cavalleresca erano specialmente di moda nel periodo tra il 1550 e il 1570, per esempio, specchio della marcia avanti del processo di rifeudalizzazione in Italia. Francesco Erspamer conta addirittura 65 titoli sul soggetto contro i 9 del ventennio precedente stampati a Venezia; alcuni di questi si rivelano i "bestseller del secolo" (61), come il *Duello* di Girolamo Muzio, tradotto presto in spagnolo.²² Anche per la letteratura classica la possibilità di assimilazione culturale per un gruppo, quale quello femminile, tradizionalmente educato poco e male, era proporzionalmente aumentata con l'esplosione della moda del classico tradotto o volgarizzato: innumerevoli testi latini e greci prima introvabili vennero di punto in bianco alla portata della borghesia, e quindi delle donne.²³

²⁰ Uso l'edizione di L. Poma, Bari, Laterza, 1964, p. 36. Su questo punto si veda Ezio Raimondi, "Dalla natura alla regola", in *Rinascimento inquieto*, Palermo, Manfredi, 1965, pp. 20-21; e Guido Baldassarri, "Introduzione ai *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* del Tasso," in *Studi Tassiani* 26 (1977), 5-38.

²¹ Si veda Francesco Erspamer, "'Degne d'un chiaro sol': Tasso e il duello", in *La biblioteca di Don Ferrante. Duello e onore nella cultura del Cinquecento*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1982, pp. 181-200. Anche se duellare era raro per il sesso femminile, non era però inaudito. Sabba Castiglione riferisce il suo caso: "conobbi una gran gentildonna in Lombardia la quale di spada e brocchiero giocava sì bene, che buono era lo schermitore che ella non abbatesse." In *Ricordi o vero ammaestramenti*, Venezia, 1562, c.112B.

²² Questi libri erano stampati in modo particolare dall'editore Gabriele Giolito. Rimando anche a Carlo Dionisotti, "La letteratura italiana nell'età del Concilio di Trento," in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*, Torino, Einaudi, 1967, pp. 203-04.

²³ Per uno studio del mercato editoriale veneziano nel Cinquecento con particolare riguardo alla fioritura di mode, rimando a Amedeo Quondam, "'Mercanzia d'onore', 'Mercanzia d'utile'.

Che tipo di romanzo epico-cavalleresco hanno scritto dunque le donne? C'erano ragioni specifiche per cimentarsi con la narrativa all'Ariosto o quella alla Tasso? Dal catalogo delle pagine precedenti è evidente che le donne si sono misurate con i tipi più vari di letteratura "eroica", ma è mia convinzione che l'*entrelacement* all'Ariosto dava alle scrittrici più libertà del *plot* alla Tasso nella creazione di avventure e situazioni. Lucrezia Marinelli nell'*Enrico* ci dà, per esempio, una figura maschile in un certo senso omologabile a quella di Goffredo nella *Gerusalemme liberata*. Ma Goffredo, è stato più volte notato, è noioso come creazione artistica appunto perché giusto in tutte le situazioni; non per niente l'eroe che rimane più presente nella mente dei lettori non è quello con più *pietas* ma quello con più pecche (Tancredi o il primo Rinaldo). Lo stesso vale per la Marinelli: l'*Enrico* si rivela ben costruito, i versi risultano ben torniti, le azioni più che verosimili secondo lo schema preferito dai neoaristotelici, ma il testo manca di quell'irriverenza, di quella "maraviglia" che così spesso funzionava da catalista per i lettori dell'Ariosto. In altre parole, se l'ingresso nella polemica sul "romanzo" che tanto infiammò i circoli critici italiani nella seconda metà del Cinquecento aveva il potere di legittimare un autore collocandolo da una parte o dall'altra del dibattito, per le donne, come la Marinelli dimostra, la strategia era a doppio taglio: entrare nel dialogo voleva dire schierarsi in una posizione precisa e adattarsi ad essa, tenendo conto in ogni caso che la *mise en scène* estetica era invariabilmente codificata secondo le esigenze di un io maschile.

Quanto a figure femminili, la scrittura alla Tasso lasciava, secondo me, meno spazio ideologicamente alla creazione di donne al positivo di quella all'Ariosto. Se Clorinda, la donna guerriera e radicalmente "altra", doveva necessariamente morire perché irrecuperabile *a priori*, se Armida, la donna ammaliatrice, poteva essere circoscritta nel suo potere e reiscritta alla fine come sottomessa, e se Erminia doveva essere fatta masochisticamente rimanere innamorata di Tancredi perché non c'era altra via di sbocco narrativo positivo per la classica donzella "innamorata", allora era meglio la *varietas* dell'Ariosto per evitare di costruire un cimitero di esemplari o trasgressive eroine in cui a mala pena le scrittrici avrebbero potuto riflettersi.

In ogni caso, sia per una narrativa in nome dell'Ariosto che in quella in nome del Tasso, era impossibile per un'autrice riscrivere da un punto di vista soggettivo maschile, mascherandosi cioè da uomo, come se la questione del suo "genere" fosse senza conseguenze. Inventarsi programmaticamente una posizione femminile era al tempo stesso complicato sia perché la codificazione a cui era presto arrivato il romanzo cavalleresco lasciava poco spazio all'inventiva

personale, sia perché non c'erano esempi sufficientemente autoritativi che legittimassero una dialettica e un immaginario femminile. In un ambiente come quello del Rinascimento in cui l'*imitatio* era di moda, come inventare tutta un'iconografia e una scrittura "altra"? Ariosto aveva imitato con l'ironia che contraddistingue la sua opera, ma per le scrittrici ironizzare sul "sorriso" di un tale autorevole precursore comportava una carica eversiva non facile da mettere in atto.²⁴

Se poi, nell'atto di autolegittimarsi come bardo autorevole della casa regnante, l'autore veniva necessariamente a misurarsi con i suoi predecessori, e se questo confronto da una parte, e quasi inevitabilmente, portava a una inibente, *bloomiana* angoscia dell'influenza, è anche vero che dall'altra conferiva allo scrittore un senso di appartenenza e legittimità. Ma questa possibilità di ritrovarsi non era aperta alle donne, visto che non c'erano state altre scrittrici che si erano misurate con la tradizione. Si potrebbe arguire, al contrario, che una madre storicamente concreta in cui queste figlie letterarie avessero potuto riconoscersi più che paure edipiche avrebbe, secondo me, non solo conferito uno stato, ma anche meglio autorizzato e canalizzato il loro sforzo creativo.²⁵

Il testo di *Tredici canti del Floridoro* di Moderata Fonte è visibilmente incompiuto.²⁶ Non siamo in possesso di nessuna spiegazione sui motivi che

²⁴ Sull'importanza mimetica e retorica della *imitatio* e *aemulatio* nel periodo, si veda Ferruccio Ulivi, *L'imitazione nella poetica del Rinascimento*, Milano, Marzorati, 1959.

²⁵ Su questa ansietà si veda Harold Bloom, *L'angoscia dell'influenza*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1973, trad. di *The Anxiety of Influence*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1973. Si sa che Ariosto non nominerà mai Boiardo. Sulla rivalità edipica tra Tasso e i suoi padri letterari, soprattutto Ariosto, rimando a Margaret Ferguson, "Torquato Tasso: The Trial of Conscience", in *Trials of Desire. Renaissance Defenses of Poetry*, New Haven, Yale UP, 1983, pp. 54-136. Per l'impossibilità di dichiarare la morte dell'autore per le donne prima ancora di essersi trovate delle madri letterarie, si veda Nancy Miller, "Arachnologies: The Woman, the Text, and the Critic", in *The Poetics of Gender*, a c. di Nancy Miller, New York, Columbia UP, 1986, pp. 270-95.

²⁶ Il titolo è nuovo, ma c'è il precedente del *Floridante* di Bernardo Tasso, lasciato incompiuto e che poi Torquato rimaneggerà e farà uscire nel 1587. Qui *Floridoro* è uno dei dieci baroni che cercano *Floridante* d'accordo con il padre di lui. *Floridante* ha anche molto in comune con l'*Amadigi* (1560) di cui la Fonte avrebbe potuto essere a conoscenza. Un'eco dell'*Amadigi* è forse possibile trovarlo nel giardino di Circetta in cui non solo c'è, come sarebbe da aspettarci, un chiaro rinvio a quello di Alcina nel *Furioso*, ma anche a quello di Nivetta (83, 54-57) di Bernardo Tasso. Per uno studio su *Floridante* si veda Antonio Daniele, "Ipotesi sul *Floridante*" nel suo *Capitoli Tassiani*, Padova, Antenore, 1983, pp. 203-41. Similarità ci sono anche tra *Floridoro* e il *Sacripante* di Lodovico Dolce (1535-36). In ambedue i testi c'è una maga chiamata Circe che ha una voce bellissima e un palazzo costruito magicamente. Dolce dà la descrizione di un ragazzo biondo di sedici anni, Selannio, che ricorda quella di *Floridoro*, e un giardino guardato da un serpente, che ricorda il terzo canto del *Floridoro*. Si veda Ronnie Terpening, "Lodovico Dolce and the Chivalric Romance", in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance. Essays in Memory of Arnolfo Ferruolo*, a c. di Gian Paolo Biasin, Albert Mancini & Nicholas Perella, Napoli, Società Editrice Napoletana, 1985,

hanno portato all'interruzione contestualmente inspiegabile e alla pubblicazione anticipata del manoscritto, ma vorrei fare due ipotesi sulla sua incompletezza: che la Fonte, avendo divagato troppo, non sapesse come concludere in maniera soddisfacente, e che infatti non avesse mai avuto in mente una vera conclusione, *à la mode* di Boiardo, o che, ipotesi altrettanto probabile, lei non potesse concludere per un avvenimento molto più mondano e meno intellettuale: proprio quell'anno si era sposata.²⁷ Che infatti la Fonte avesse perfino potuto dedicarsi alla letteratura perché non era ancora sposata (contrasse nozze a 26 anni, piuttosto tardi per le donne del suo periodo) non è soltanto un'ipotesi, se si pensa che da ora in poi pubblicherà solo un'opera sacra, *La Resurrettione*,²⁸ occupata come è a fare figli, e che il testo del suo trattato *Il merito delle donne*, su cui la critica si sta finalmente soffermando, uscirà solo parecchi anni dopo la sua morte.²⁹

pp. 167-77.

²⁷ Notizie sulla vita della Fonte (Venezia, 1555-1592) vengono da *La Vita della Signora Modesta Pozzo dei Zorzi, nominata Moderata Fonte*, scritto nel 1593, un anno dopo la morte, dallo zio Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni e pubblicato nella sezione prefatoria di *Il merito delle donne*. Sappiamo dallo zio che la Fonte veniva da una famiglia benestante veneziana e che era rimasta presto orfana con un fratello di poco maggiore di lei. La sua educazione era limitata, come tipicamente era quella delle adolescenti nei conventi. Aveva però appreso da autodidatta le lezioni assegnate al fratello Lunardo, facendone più profitto di lui, secondo lo zio. Venuta a abitare a casa del Doglioni quando lui aveva contratto matrimonio con una parente di lei, la Fonte improvvisamente trovò sfocio al suo desiderio di conoscenza e alle sue ambizioni letterarie. Doglioni stesso, notaio di professione, storico per passione, e appartenente agli Accademici Incogniti, si preoccupò della pubblicazione delle opere della nipote. La Fonte si sposò con Filippo de' Zorzi, "avvocato fiscal nell'ufficio Ilustriss. dell'acque", come Doglioni scrive, e probabilmente interessato, sebbene marginalmente, alla letteratura. Esiste infatti un suo sonetto pubblicato in prefazione all'opera della moglie, *La Resurrettione*. La Fonte ebbe quattro figli e morì dando la nascita all'ultima figlia. È sepolta ai Frari, a Venezia. Data la sua posizione sociale e il tipo di vita ritirato che aveva condotto, la sua reputazione, diversamente da quella di altre poetesse del Cinquecento, è, una volta tanto, inoppugnabile. Già nel Settecento F. S. Quadrio, lodando la sua *verve* creativa, aveva messo in chiaro che essa era una "savia madre di famiglia" (F. S. Quadrio, *Della storia e della ragione d'ogni poesia*, Milano, Francesco Agnelli, 1741, vol. II, p. 274). In questi ultimi anni Emilio Zanette ha sentito il dovere di ripetere l'elogio: "fu una moglie e una mamma esemplare, come era stata una esemplare signorina" ("Bianca Capello e la sua poetessa", *Nuova Antologia* 88 [1953], 455-68, p. 454). Non si sa quanto l'appellativo di moglie esemplare possa aver potuto far piacere alla Fonte in quanto non abbiamo particolarità sul suo matrimonio. In ogni caso, nel suo trattato *Il Merito*, la posizione di moglie appare tra le più gravose da sopportare per le donne. Per ulteriori notizie sulla vita della Fonte e ulteriore bibliografia (limitata spesso, come ci aspetteremmo, alla menzione del nome), rimando allo studio comprensivo di Adriana Chemello, "Gioco e dissimulazione in Moderata Fonte" in *Moderata Fonte, Il merito delle donne*, a c. di Adriana Chemello, Venezia, Eidos, 1988, IX-LXIII, note 6 e 7, pp. LIX-LX.

²⁸ Il titolo completo è *La Resurrettione di Giesu Christo Nostro Signore*, Venezia, Appresso Gio. Domenico Imberti, 1592. Consiste di 142 ottave ed è dedicato a una donna, Margarita Langosca Pargaglia, Contessa della Bastia.

²⁹ Il titolo completo è *Il Merito delle Donne*. . . . *In due giornate. Ove chiaramente si scuopre quanto siano elle degne e più perfette de gli uomini*. È in due libri. L'edizione critica, curata da

Il *Floridoro* è scritto in ottava rima, il metro tipico dei romanzi cavallereschi, e un metro che la Fonte sperimentava contemporaneamente in una composizione sacra, *La Passione di Cristo*.³⁰ L'azione si svolge in un tempo precristiano imprecisato, con motivi magici, alla moda di Ariosto, ma non infernali, alla moda di Tasso, e in una quanto mai vaga località geografica mediterranea, in cui però sono fatti riferimenti precisi a Delfo e Atene in Grecia e ad Alessandria in Egitto. Come nella maggior parte dei "libri di battaglia", è facile riconoscere nel *Floridoro* un codice retorico ben assimilato, dalla sortita notturna dai risultati dubbi al catalogo di due differenti armate, dal banchetto finale all'eroe che piange, dalla nave che naufraga alle digressioni per introdurre storie d'amore e conflitti sentimentali.³¹

L'apparato strutturale, come l'autrice mette in chiaro nella seconda ottava, mima lo schema tipico delle imprese cavalleresche e sentimentali all'Ariosto: "Canta l'inclite imprese e i dolci affetti / De' cavalieri e delle donne illustri" (I, 2), dove le donne però sono sorprendentemente in posizione di soggetto tanto per le imprese eroiche quanto per quelle amorose.³² In più sono le donne

Adriana Chemello, e da cui citerò, è uscita nel 1988. Sul *Merito* si veda Adriana Chemello, "La donna, il modello, l'immaginario: Moderata Fonte e Lucrezia Marinella", in *Nel cerchio della luna*, op. cit., pp. 95-160, e "Moderata Fonte" in *Le stanze ritrovate. Antologia di scrittrici venete dal Quattrocento al Novecento*, a c. di Antonia Arslan, Adriana Chemello e Gilberto Pizzamiglio, Venezia, Eidos, 1991, pp. 70-82; A. Jaquinta, "Tentativi di autocoscienza in un gruppo del Cinquecento", in *La presenza dell'uomo nel femminismo*, a c. di M. Lonzi e A. Jaquinta, Milano, Scritti di rivolta femminile, 1978, pp. 45-78; Ginevra Conti-Odorisio, *Donna e società nel Seicento*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1979, che per motivi di simmetria con la Marinelli e la Arcangela Tarabotti include la Fonte sorprendentemente in un libro sul Seicento; Beatrice Collina, "Moderata Fonte e *Il merito delle donne*", *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989), 142-64; Paola Malpezzi-Price, "A Woman's Discourse in the Italian Renaissance: Moderata Fonte's *Il merito delle donne*", *Annali d'Italianistica* 7 (1989), 165-81; Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism. Literary Texts and Political Models*, Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1990, pp. 253-57; e Margaret King, *Le donne nel Rinascimento*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1991.

³⁰ *La Passione di Cristo* (Venezia, presso Domenico e Gio. Battista Guerra fratelli, 1582) è dedicata al Serenissimo Niccolò da Ponte, principe di Venezia, una figura che diventerà importante nella parte encomiastica del *Floridoro*. Contemporanea è anche la scrittura di una breve cantata (otto carte) intitolata *Le Feste* e rappresentata davanti allo stesso Niccolò da Ponte, il 26 dicembre 1581. È un'ulteriore testimonianza del fervore creativo di quegli anni cui farà da contrappeso il totale silenzio del decennio successivo.

³¹ Su questi motivi, si veda, per esempio, Guido Baldassarri, *Il sogno di Zeus*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1982. Sul romanzo tra Ariosto e Tasso, si veda Roberto Bruscastelli, "'Romanzo' ed 'epos' dall'Ariosto al Tasso", in AA.VV., *Il romanzo. Origine e sviluppo delle strutture narrative nella letteratura occidentale*. Pisa, 1987. Sui temi del romanzo eroico cavalleresco del primo seicento, si veda Albert Mancini, *Romanzi e romanzieri del Seicento*, Napoli, Società Editrice Napoletana, 1981, pp. 103-38.

³² Cito dall'*editio princeps* stampata a Venezia dal Rampazetti nel 1581. La copia consultata è adesso nella Rare Books Library della Duke University e contiene correzioni a mano. Manca però del frontespizio, del sonetto dedicatorio di Nicolò Doglioni, e dell'"Argomento" del primo canto. Contemporaneamente ho consultato il microfilm della Yale University Library. La numerazione delle ottave e l'ammodernamento del testo sono stati fatti da me. Per ulteriori precisazioni rimando

consistentemente a determinare il movimento epico cavalleresco. Se in Ariosto un numero considerevole di cavalieri erranti rispondeva a motivi personali e narcisistici, quali il recupero di armature, elmi, spade e cavalli (desiderio erotico, il loro, metonimicamente spostato su oggetti conquistabili e maschili) e se in Tasso l'appello all'avventura era molto più politico e ideologico ("Canto l'arme pietose e 'l capitano / che 'l gran sepolcro liberò di Cristo" I, 1), per Fonte è sempre un richiamo altro, femminile, che motiva i cavalieri alla *aventure*.

Il *Floridoro* rappresenta "l'epopea del femminismo", scrive Emilio Zanette, ma il testo in sé è "opera sciatta e scialba" (465), con l'unica parte interessante, il critico suggerisce quanto più prevedibilmente, costituita dalla descrizione di una battaglia navale, quella di Lepanto. Autocreatosi castigatore di donne dalle presunzioni letterarie, Zanette non manca di attaccare la Fonte per la "mancanza assoluta di femminilità" e le rimprovera perfino il fatto di aver dedicato il suo lavoro a una donna non troppo morale e al di sopra di ogni sospetto, quale Bianca Capello, nobile veneziana. L'obiezione mi è nuova: sin da quando, infatti, la moralità dei protettori diventa soggetto di interesse da parte dei critici?³³ Il *Floridoro* è dedicato ai granduchi di Toscana Francesco de' Medici e Bianca Capello, ma è effettivamente la granduchessa Bianca, famosa anche come protettrice di letterati, incluso Tasso, a essere più volte celebrata. Dedicare un romanzo epico a una donna non era ai tempi inaudito, ma quanto meno raro, e politicamente in ogni caso poco fruttuoso, ma le poetesse lo hanno fatto: non solo la Fonte, ma anche la Sarocchi, per esempio, ha scelto una donna. Lo stesso vale per il trattato della Fonte, *Il merito*, dedicato, anni dopo, a Livia Feltria della Rovere, duchessa di Urbino.³⁴ L'autrice mette l'accento sulle qualità intellettuali della Capello e fa coincidere la fine del suo *excursus* storico encomiastico su Venezia con l'anno 1579, l'anno appunto in cui la Capello

alla "Nota al testo" che precede l'edizione critica di *Tredici canti del Floridoro* da me curata e in corso di stampa presso la Mucchi di Modena.

³³ Zanette accusa la Fonte di un errore imperdonabile: si dimentica di soffermarsi sulla bellezza della sua protettrice. Così la Capello, sempre secondo il critico, si arrabbiò e decise di non remunerare più la sua sbadata ammiratrice. Errore che egli stesso si vedrà bene dal commettere riguardo alla Fonte. Il problema è, si lamenta, che purtroppo questa bellezza in lei non esisteva: "non era bella" (456). Sulla Capello si veda anche Maria Luisa Mariotti Masi, *Bianca Capello. Una veneziana alla corte dei Medici*, Milano, Mursia, 1986; e Roberto Cantagalli, "Bianca Capello e una leggenda da sfatare: la questione del figlio supposto", in *Nuova rivista storica* 49 (1965), 636-52. Del *Floridoro* si occupa brevemente anche la Fumagalli che ne nota l'imitazione ariostesca e il verso "modesto senza pretese" (176).

³⁴ La *Scarderbeide* della Sarocchi è dedicato a donna Costanza Colonna Sforza, marchesa di Caravaggio. Il testo della Terracina è offerto a persone diverse, a seconda dell'edizione. Quella che io ho consultato, del Bulifon di Napoli (1698), ha una dedica a Girolama Loffredo, principessa di S. Severo. Il libro della d'Aragona è offerto invece a un nobile mantovano, Giulio della Valle; quello della Marinelli al principe Francesco Erizzo. In quanto a *Il Merito*, il testo ha la dedica di Cicilia di Zorzi, figlia della Fonte, alla duchessa di Urbino, sua patrona. Nel caso dei trattati c'era, in ogni caso, una tradizione di dedica a donne. Per esempio, Tasso aveva offerto il suo *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca* (1582) alla duchessa di Mantova.

diventava granduchessa. In una simile occasione encomiastica nel *Furioso* Ariosto aveva creato un affresco che illustrava azioni future degli Este culminanti con la celebrazione del duca Alfonso al cui servizio appunto lui lavorava. Il dipinto era descritto dal proprietario della Rocca di Tristano a due donne, Bradamante e Ullania, che rimanevano letteralmente a bocca aperta dalla meraviglia (canto XXXIII). Qui il sesso delle persone e dei dedicatari è radicalmente cambiato: non solo è una donna a articolare la storiografia e la grammatica del potere a due uomini, ma gli avvenimenti che porteranno alla creazione di un nuovo impero *sine fine* culminano con la celebrazione di un'altra donna, Bianca Capello appunto, "onor del suo sesso e del suo tempo" (XII, 7), per cui, infatti, il capolavoro scultoreo è fatto.

È evidente inoltre anche a un primo sguardo che il *Floridoro* non registra a nessun livello il tenore delle scaramucce che si venivano combattendo proprio in quegli anni nel campo critico tra i fautori del romanzo ariostesco a struttura aperta e addizioni esemplari e i proponenti, in nome di una discussa riscoperta della *Poetica* aristotelica, di un ritorno all'epica classica di Omero e Virgilio dall'andamento serrato e dal tono eroico.³⁵ Il *Floridoro*, in altre parole, è un testo che usa con una certa originalità tutte le innovazioni ariostesche, dalle agnizioni per risolvere situazioni critiche alle interruzioni improvvise, dai proemi con toni riflessivi alle scelte encomiastiche, appunto perché questi elementi piacevano al pubblico di allora. In ogni caso però Fonte si mantiene al di fuori delle posizioni critiche accademiche.

È il titolo stesso a introdurre il protagonista maschile. Floridoro è un adolescente con poca esperienza e grosse ambizioni che va a cimentarsi in tornei indetti dal re di Grecia, Cleardo, una replica del Carlo Magno ariostesco, non impegnato però in una guerra di religione ma ad arbitrare giostre dai fini amoroso/cortesi. Il premio per il vincitore non è, come ci aspetteremmo dalla tradizione, la figlia del re, Celsidea, una nuova Elena dalle bellezze rinomate e dalle virtù documentabili, in onore della quale le giostre vengono appunto indette, ma semplicemente una corona incastonata che lei porrà in persona sulla testa del fortunato (XII, 5). Floridoro vince, ma non può dichiarare il suo amore e ricevere il premio stabilito perché ha combattuto, data la sua giovane età, sotto false insegne e senza l'assenso paterno.

Il problema strutturale che salta ben presto agli occhi è che Floridoro viene introdotto per la prima volta, e sorprendentemente, solo al quinto canto, e presto di nuovo lasciato. In più, se il suo valore militare è provato in maniera indiscussa, non altrettanto si può dire sulla sua maturità psicologica: il suo

³⁵ Su questa controversia critica si veda, per esempio, Bernard Weinberg, "The Quarrel over Ariosto and Tasso," in *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, Chicago, U of Chicago P, 1961, vol. II, pp. 954-1073; e il recente libro di Javitch, op. cit. Sul tempo epico, rimando ai saggi in *Quasi un piccolo mondo. Tentativi di codificazione del genere epico nel Cinquecento*, a c. di Guido Baldassarri, Milano, Unicopli, 1982.

comportamento di fronte sia all'amore sia all'amicizia è tutt'al più adolescenziale, le sue pene e la sua malinconia suonano ridicole, e contrariamente a tutti i racconti del tipo che ho letto, la gratificazione erotica finale è data come impensabile. Naturalmente ci sono già state nella letteratura cavalleresca figure eroiche efebiche e immature, e in questo senso Fonte non è unica: Ariosto, per esempio, ci ha offerto un Medoro biondo di cui si innamora per un momento perfino Zerbino e le cui abilità erotiche l'autore gli farà scrivere nella cava non tanto perché gli altri le leggano, credo (con buona pace di Orlando), ma in quanto perché lui stesso aveva problemi nel farlo registrare nella mente dei lettori; più tardi Lodovico Dolce caratterizzerà nel suo *Sacripante* un altro adolescente biondo femminilizzato ma anche lui dalle tendenze sorprendentemente eterosessuali, Selannio, disperatamente innamorato di Marphisa.³⁶ Ma questo Floridoro di maschile ha solo il nome e dall'inizio è letteralmente raffigurato come una donna:

L'aer del suo bel viso era sì grato,
Sì vago lo splendor de' bei crin d'oro,
E la sembianza avea tanto divina
Ch'ad amarlo ogni cor ben ch'aspro inchina.

Venne col padre accorto il gentil figlio
Con un vestir delizioso e vago,
Amor ridea nel suo tranquillo ciglio,
Anzi pareva d'amor la propria imago.
Lo splendido color bianco e vermiglio
Ogni occhio fea di contemplarlo vago,
Ogni sua parte, fuor che la favella,
Par d'una giovenetta illustre e bella.
(V, 45-46).

Floridoro inoltre, esattamente come altre guerriere nel *Furioso*, veste completamente di bianco, dall'abito al mantello; bianco è coreograficamente tutto quello che lo circonda, dalle piume sul cimiero al colore candido del suo cavallo (VII, 40), e Biancador è il falso nome che sceglierà durante il torneo. Questa transcodificazione è emblematica perché non si capisce bene che cosa il bianco voglia sottolineare in un uomo. Sappiamo che per le donne il bianco sta per il loro stato vergineo ("a dimostrar la semplicità e purità nostra", scriverà Fonte nel *Merito*, 164), come nel caso di Bradamante dell'Ariosto, ma la stessa cosa non sembra sia stata importante per i cavalieri.

Adesso sarebbe facile dire che il problema, con la drammatizzazione narrativa

³⁶ Sulla progressiva enfasi intorno al bello maschile adolescenziale che caratterizzerà molto romanzo del Seicento, si veda Giovanni Getto, *Barocco in prosa e in poesia*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1969, p. 335.

di Floridoro, viene dalla Fonte: scrittrice non ferrata, si direbbe in questa lettura, lei si dimostra inabile a caratterizzare un uomo in maniera credibile; al momento tragico è capace di sostituirla solo uno patetico e alla legge dell'onore quella più struggente del melodramma. Ma siccome la Fonte non mostra la stessa idiosincrasia con le donne, preferirei pensare che c'è un motivo più particolare per cui lei fallisce con Floridoro, e cioè che la rappresentazione dell'eroe cavalleresco tramandata a lei attraverso i secoli diventa problematica a mettere in atto quando è una scrittrice a doverla proporre. Così, invece di presentare Floridoro nei momenti di crisi con un io alienato (come il Tancredi della *Gerusalemme*) per esempio, o frantumato (come l'Orlando del *Furioso*), la Fonte sceglie di mostrarcelo con una soggettività ancora non acquistata. Avrebbe un autore fatto diversamente? Certo è che era possibile per gli autori, in un periodo in cui la capacità umana (maschile) di ricrearsi come soggetto costituiva il perno di un numero sorprendente di discorsi umanistici, rappresentare un io eroico come alienato, cioè un io cosciente della propria unicità ma che per ragioni varie veniva a perdersi. Ma la mia ipotesi è che un'autrice avrebbe trovato difficile rinunciare a quello che non aveva ancora: l'accesso filosofico alla soggettività; così nell'impianto mimetico del *Floridoro* non solo l'io del protagonista è, a dir poco immaturo, ma è appunto non-completo, non cosciente, peculiarmente femminile.³⁷

È inoltre più che probabile, secondo me, che Fonte abbia introdotto Floridoro tardi non tanto perché si fosse sbagliata a fare i conti sulla lunghezza del suo lavoro, ma perché, più semplicemente, voleva fare di Floridoro solo uno dei vari protagonisti della sua opera e lasciare la storia all'eroina femminile, Risamante, con le cui imprese appunto il *Floridoro* comincia e finisce. Poi ha, a un certo punto, dovuto cambiare idea, visto che c'erano sì nella tradizione cavalleresca testi in cui le donne erano protagoniste, ma il loro protagonismo aveva poco di imitabile per una scrittrice intenzionata a creare un'immagine in cui poter riflettere, senza vergogna, la coscienza di una identità femminile.³⁸ E

³⁷ Sulla soggettività, o mancanza di soggettività, femminile nei discorsi filosofici del periodo, si veda Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*, New York, Methuen, 1985, p. 149. Sulla donna come il necessario non-io usato come punto di partenza per discorsi maschili miranti a definire chi si era, non si era, o non si voleva apparire, in modo particolare nel Castiglione, si veda Valeria Finucci, *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 1992.

³⁸ Per esempio, nelle sue varie incarnazioni, Marfisa è presente in *Marphisa bizzarra* di G. Battista Dragoncino (1531, 1532, 1545), *Tre primi canti di battaglie* di Pietro Aretino (1537, 1540, 1544), *Due primi canti di Marfisa innamorata* di Marco Bandarini (1550) e *Amor di Marfisa* di Cataneo Danese (1562). Per Angelica, ci sono i testi di *De le lagrime di Angelica* di Pietro Aretino (1533, 1538, 1541, 1543, 1545, 1555), *Amorosa vendetta* di Marco Bandarini (1551) e *Angelica innamorata* di Marco Brusantini (1550, 1553). Per Bradamante, c'è *Bradamante gelosa* di Secondo Tarentino (1552). Per una lista più completa, rimando a Beer, "Appendice II". La caratterizzazione di Angelica era così peggiorata da Ariosto in poi che, scrive la Fumagalli, "ella è diventata il tema, o meglio il pretesto, per stuzzicare con descrizioni lascive la curiosità morbosa

così ha scelto di sviluppare il nucleo dell'eroe maschile, con il suo corollario di *Bildungsroman* amoroso, da connettere lentamente alla storia della sua eroina. Si può dedurre infatti dalla profezia sulla discendenza di Risamante che Floridoro sposerà Celsidea da cui avrà un figlio, appropriatamente chiamato Floricelso, che sposerà col tempo la figlia di Risamante (III, 44-46). Sappiamo che Fonte non scriveva per il piacere di scrivere, ma che aveva un occhio anche ai destinatari del suo lavoro. Che senso aveva veicolare le sue energie su un modello innovativo che da una parte mancava di legittimazione nella tradizione e dall'altra scartava la possibilità di una identificazione con il padre della tradizione stessa, Ariosto?

Ciò non toglie che non uno, ma tutti gli uomini di questo testo, tranne forse Filardo, giovane dal grosso cuore fraterno ma dai motivi, ancora una volta, adolescenziali, siano cavalieri antieroi e maschi falliti, persone dalle ambizioni enormi ma dai risultati deludenti, che si disperano ma fanno poco, o che, come Risardo, decidono di imbarcarsi in grosse imprese, senza mai portarne a termine nessuna, arrivando sempre tardi all'appuntamento militare importante. Se, come afferma Francesco Erspamer, la cultura dell'onore (maschile) raggiunge il suo apice verso la metà del sedicesimo secolo con esplicite codificazioni comportamentali,³⁹ e se, per fare un esempio più letterario, era un esemplare senso dell'onore cristiano a motivare costantemente, con connessi sensi di colpa in caso di deviazioni sentimentali, i "compagni erranti" del Tasso, questa cultura sembra toccare molto poco la Fonte.

Così c'è in *Floridoro* un giovanetto tredicenne dalle forme efebiche e dalla sessualità ambigua, contento di vivere con la madre in un mondo intrauterino fino all'arrivo di Risamante, guerriera dai risultati militari tangibili, che metterà fine alla sua non-vita in una caverna (III, 22-24); c'è Nicobaldo, che di baldo si trova ad avere ben poco, il quale aspetta che Risamante lo aiuti a liberare la sua Lucimena (VI, 3-84); e c'è il nano africano, re dei Pigmei, che invece di mettere in salvo la solare Raggidora, di cui è innamorato, se ne va fuori dal regno a chiedere aiuto solo per tornarsene indietro a mani vuote e con promesse vaghe (II, 58-97 e IV, 46-48). Questi cavalieri sono indubbiamente virtuosi, come la Fonte scrive parafrasando l'Ariosto ("O gran virtù de cavallier passati" III, 1), ma certamente poco maschili.

La ribellione alla legge del padre che è insita nella maggior parte di questi testi letterari, inoltre, una volta fatta, non porta nel *Floridoro* alla reinscrizione dell'ordine dopo il passaggio traumatico dell'eroe dall'adolescenza alla maturità — la tipica narrativa edipica — ma al limbo: Floridoro, è vero, se ne infischia del no del padre e del re, che lo considera un figlio, alla sua partecipazione al torneo e così asserisce la sua individualità, ma niente ci lascia pensare che abbia imparato una qualsiasi lezione salutare. La sua vittoria in campo, inoltre, non

dei lettori volgari" (152); Marfisa, da parte sua, è così domesticata che "è diventata una Bradamante" (155).

³⁹ *La biblioteca di Don Ferrante*, op. cit., p. 46.

porta a benefici militari, sentimentali e politici, come ci aspetteremmo dato il genere letterario, ed è presto cancellata nella mente dei lettori dall'infantilismo che contraddistinguerà le sue azioni una volta che egli diventa preda della follia amorosa. In breve, la Fonte reagisce a un'ideologia sessuale che vuole posizioni maschili/femminili prestabilite con il cavaliere eroico da una parte e la donzella passiva da difendere dall'altra, e viene fuori con caratterizzazioni radicalmente diverse e in un certo senso problematiche. Ma se ai nostri occhi gli uomini appaiono femminei, forse non è tanto perché la scrittrice non sa fare di meglio, quanto perché non siamo abituati nel nostro immaginario culturale ad associare le donne con l'eroico e gli uomini con il patetico, le donne con un'economia di desiderio e gli uomini con il rimosso della cultura.

Perfino il tema della sortita notturna che nell'*epos* viene adoperato per dare esempi lirici di eroismo maschile — ho in mente Eurialo e Niso nell'*Eneide* e Cloridano e Medoro nel *Furioso* — non funziona quando è una donna a rilegittimarla: piuttosto che onore, il re Acreonte nel *Floridoro* cerca l'amore nell'uscita al chiaro di luna; travestito e irriconoscibile, va grossolanamente vantandosi delle sue prodezze sessuali e si preoccupa di come meglio poter arrivare al balcone della donna della cui bellezza si è appena innamorato e che, molto più grossolanamente, intende rapire e violentare. Dall'avventura Fonte lo fa uscire come si merita: morto, ucciso per sbaglio, ironicamente, dal suo stesso fratello.

Fonte in ogni caso non fallisce quando si cimenta con la tipologia femminile, di cui offre una varietà quanto mai interessante. Anche Celsidea, il cui unico scopo nel *Floridoro* sembra sia, data la sua apparenza esteriore, quello di essere oggetto di fantasie maschili e costante generatrice di desiderio, è descritta non solo come bella, ma come intelligente: siede vicino al padre nei consigli di stato ("Soleva il re per suo contento il giorno / Farsi seder questa fanciulla a lato" I, 9) e, cosa ancora più interessante, è erede designata del regno ("ch'erede esser dovea del greco impero" I, 14). Segno iconico di desiderio nella sua totale inaccessibilità, Celsidea funziona come catalista delle aspirazioni dei vari cavalieri alla gloria militare e come pretesto per combattimenti autorizzati e rituali. In questo senso, lei promuove quello che, riscrivendo il desiderio mimetico di René Girard per includere il genere delle persone coinvolte (per Girard il soggetto, tradizionalmente maschile, desidera l'oggetto, tradizionalmente femminile, a meno che non si tratti letteralmente di una cosa, perché è il rivale a desiderarlo), Eve Sedgwick ha chiamato il desiderio omosociale ("homosocial desire") e Luce Irigaray la "hommo-sexualité" (scritta anche "hom(m)osexualité") maschile, cioè il tipo di relazioni, di solito non sessuale, che gli uomini stabiliscono tra loro sul corpo, letteralmente, dell'altro sesso. Spronati dal desiderio per una donna passiva e assolutamente ammirata dagli altri, è stato teorizzato, gli uomini lottano per stabilire narcisisticamente, senza però essere troppo accusati di narcisismo (dopo tutto combattono per difendere un'altra persona), il loro valore intrinseco e estrinseco, e quindi la loro

identità, in una comunità di uomini dal cui giudizio dipendono più che mai e alla cui appartenenza mirano.⁴⁰

Ma perfino nell'atto di ricreare alla lettera le convenzioni cavalleresche, Fonte rovescia la tradizione: la giostra per Celsidea sarà vinta non dai suoi ammiratori militarmente percepiti come più forti (Acreonte, per esempio), ma da quelli meno esteriormente mascholini: l'adolescenziale Floridoro nel torneo ufficiale, e Risamante nel combattimento con Macandro che originerà la decisione reale di indire il torneo stesso. Nessuno dei due tiene al tipo di riconoscimento e alla solidarietà degli altri uomini del gruppo: Floridoro deve farne a meno perché non può togliersi l'elmo e Risamante è impegnata in cause più personali.

Non è Celsidea, in ogni caso, ma sono le gemelle Risamante e Biondaura a costituire la spina dorsale del *Floridoro*. E la scelta è, che io sappia, insolita, perché anche se la letteratura del periodo era piena di gemelli, questi erano di solito maschi o di sesso misto (come, per esempio, Bradamante e Ricciardetto, e Marfisa e Ruggiero dell'Ariosto). Ambedue bellissime, le sorelle si presentano ai poli opposti della femminilità ("una è molle e delicata / E l'altra va come guerriero armata" II, 30) e si comportano in maniera antitetica: Risamante è la donna soggetto, Biondaura quella oggetto; la prima combatte, per la seconda si combatte; due facce, quindi, identiche e dicotome, come Fonte metterà in evidenza, della donna in cultura.

Risamante, in consonanza con Bradamante nel *Furioso* il cui nome rispecchia, è una guerriera risoluta: "il cavallier pareo gagliardo e franco / Alla presenza, e sopra ogn'altro ardito" (II, 5). Entra nel *Floridoro* armata di tutto punto, un giglio incastonato sullo scudo, e combatte, vincendolo, come Bradamante con Sacripante, un eroe borioso, Macandro. Quindi, nel terzo canto, in simmetria col terzo del *Furioso*, si ritrova in un antro in cui le viene presentata la propria futura genealogia. Contrariamente all'eroina ariostesca, però, Risamante non è innamorata, e quindi ha ancora occasione di mostrare il suo lato militare. Se Bradamante, richiamata da un messaggero a Marsiglia fin dal secondo canto perché difenda da attacchi saraceni il suo possedimento più importante, decide invece di andarsene alla ricerca del suo Ruggiero, e se presto viene in possesso di una lancia magica che rende le sue vittorie comiche invece che eroiche, Risamante combatte con armi vere per riconquistarsi un regno, l'Armenia, verso cui tutte le sue energie sono canalizzate.

Destinata a "opre alte e leggiadre" (II, 31), Risamante è stata allevata da un mago che, conscio del suo destino eroico, l'aveva rubata da piccola ai genitori e istruita nelle arti militari. Una volta cresciuta e sapute le sue origini, essa è tutta

⁴⁰ Si veda René Girard, *La Violence et le sacré*, Parigi, Grasset, 1972; Luce Irigaray, *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Parigi, Editions de Minuit, 1977, p. 186; Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York, Columbia UP, 1985; e Sarah Kofman, *L'Enigme de la Femme: La Femme dans les textes de Freud*, Parigi, Galilée, 1980.

tesa a riprendersi quello che le appartiene di diritto, metà della sua terra, che il padre alla morte della madre aveva lasciato alla gemella non avendo più notizie di lei e che Biondaura aveva in seguito rifiutato di condividere, negando qualsiasi consanguineità. Nel *Floridoro* è solo a Risamante che Fonte riserva la *quête*: tutti gli altri personaggi si muovono sul terreno dell'avventura. La sua traiettoria è quella tipica degli eroi: allontanamento dalla famiglia, crescita solitaria in compagnia di un anziano maestro, scoperta del proprio destino, dimostrazione di valore, ritorno alla terra natale e assunzione delle prerogative reali con futura influente genealogia da rintracciarsi attraverso i secoli. Siamo quindi di fronte a una narrativa edipica? Certamente, e come potrebbe essere altrimenti nel nostro inconscio culturale e in modo particolare nell'epica?⁴¹ Ma se la storia di Risamante è in sé edipica, la costruzione testuale del *Floridoro* rifiuta di farsi lineare e di tendere logicamente e provvidenzialmente verso una conclusione soddisfacente. Ma su questo tornerò più avanti.

È chiaro che Fonte non è stata la prima, né certamente l'unica, a dare alle donne l'opportunità di occuparsi di problemi politici e militari. Le Crociate, per esempio, avevano visto un buon numero di donne partecipare alle spedizioni non semplicemente nel ruolo che ci aspetteremmo di prostitute e serve domestiche, o in quello di mogli, come in Tasso, ma come combattenti ben armate.⁴² La presenza femminile in ruoli insoliti, incluso quello militare, viene del resto data come normale nel testo; se non molte donne si sono affermate, Fonte mette in chiaro, è stato, in ogni caso, per motivi culturali e non biologici:

Le donne in ogni età fur da natura
Di gran giudizio e d'animo dotate,
Né men atte a mostrar con studio e cura
Senno e valor degli uomini son nate;
E perché se comune è la figura,
Se non son le sostanze variate,
S'hanno simile un cibo e un parlar, denno
Differente aver poi l'ardir e 'l senno?

Sempre s'è visto e vede (pur ch'alcuna
Donna v'abbia voluto il pensier porre)
Nella milizia riuscir più d'una,

⁴¹ Per una ricostruzione della narrativa occidentale come edipica, rimando a Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte*, Parigi, Editions du Seuil, 1973. Per i problemi con la logica edipica quando il genere del soggetto del discorso cambia, si veda Teresa De Lauretis, "Oedipus Interruptus", *Wide Angle* 7 (1985), 34–40.

⁴² La loro partecipazione era anche stata ratificata da papa Innocenzo III in *Quod super his* and *Ex multa* (1200–1209) e notata da testimoni oculari. Si veda James Brundage, "The Crusader's Wife: A Canonistic Quandary" in *Studia Gratiana* 12 (1967), 425–41, p. 434, e *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusades*, Madison, U of Wisconsin P, 1969, p. 77; e Helen Solterer, "Figures of Female Militancy in Medieval France", *Signs* 16 (1991), 522–49, p. 536.

E 'l pregio e 'l grido a molti uomini torre;
 E così nelle lettere e in ciascuna
 Impresa che l'uom pratica e discorre
 Le donne sì buon frutto han fatto e fanno,
 Che gli uomini a invidiar punto non hanno.
 (IV, 1-2)

Né Fonte è stata l'unica a darci guerriere dai muscoli possenti, tranne quello del cuore. Marfisa nel *Furioso* ha molto di cui essere orgogliosa e Clorinda nella *Liberata* si diverte quasi a smembrare i suoi nemici. Ma Marfisa rimane consistentemente una figura comica e Clorinda, ripetutamente proiettata come "mostruosa", viene uccisa dal suo stesso amante.⁴³ Risamante, al contrario, e in collusione con il suo nome, è figura seria e ha fini politici e pratici ben precisi, che consegue.

E li consegue da donna. Non c'è niente di androgino nella descrizione di Risamante perché è solo l'armatura a darla via per uomo. In un immaginario culturale in cui la donna è collocata in opposizione all'uomo e al tempo stesso proiettata come sua necessaria alterità perché meglio rifletta la rappresentazione che lui ha di sé — la costruzione del simbolico come la offre Jacques Lacan —, nella figura dell'amazzone sono di solito fatte confluire tutte le rappresentazioni di un femminile aberrante: né uomo (date le caratteristiche sessuali femminili) né donna (date le scelte comportamentali maschili), l'amazzone abita in un territorio altro. Altro fino a un certo punto naturalmente, perché se nel mito le amazzoni sono consistentemente rappresentate come disinteressate al sesso, è anche vero che esse sono decisamente eterosessuali: se non marginalizzate con la morte — ferite tradizionalmente nella loro parte più femminile e materna (il seno/cuore) per aver rifiutato una identificazione al femminile in cultura (si veda il caso di Camilla nell'*Eneide* e di Clorinda nella *Gerusalemme liberata*) — venivano femminilizzate con il matrimonio, quindi recuperate come oggetto di desiderio (la situazione di Bradamante nel *Furioso*). La possibilità di una loro scelta sessuale omosessuale non è stata in genere offerta perché questa scelta avrebbe messo in questione il principio della indispensabilità maschile nel romanzo cavalleresco o, se si vuole, nella narrativa in genere, con la connessa gerarchizzazione delle relazioni sociosessuali. Ne consegue che l'amazzone è essenzialmente una creazione di uomini per uomini: immaginata come trasgressiva, sì, ma non al punto da non poter essere recuperata come moglie o, nel caso la sua identità fosse troppo asessuata, punita per essersi messa troppo al di là della legge.⁴⁴

⁴³ Sulla figura di Clorinda come mostruosa, si veda Valeria Finucci, *The Politics of the Body in the Italian Renaissance: Masquerading Sex and Gender*, lavoro in corso.

⁴⁴ Sull'androgino, l'omosessuale e il transessuale, si veda Finucci, *The Lady Vanishes*, cap. 7 e 8. In modo specifico sull'amazzone, si vedano le pagine 237-39. Per l'identificazione delle amazzoni con l'eterosessualità rimando a Page DuBois, *Centaur and Amazons: Women and the Pre-history of the Great Chain of Being*, Ann Arbor, U of Michigan P, 1982, p. 69; e Winfried

Adesso la Fonte avrebbe potuto proporre una figura di amazzone anticonformista come anticonformistiche erano state le sue rappresentazioni maschili. Ma non lo fa, secondo me, per due motivi. Prima di tutto, lei sa fin troppo bene che nella cultura del suo tempo ci sono solo due ruoli rimediabili per le donne: quello di moglie e quello di monaca o, in realtà, uno, perché tradizionalmente la decisione di monacare le figlie veniva presa come risultato di non avere a portata di mano una scelta matrimoniale socialmente più vantaggiosa. C'era inoltre un unico comportamento sessuale raccomandabile e, ancora una volta, da usufruire solo con il matrimonio. Nel *Merito*, un'opera dai fini più teoretici che rappresentazionali, Fonte avrebbe scelto come stato ottimale della donna quello non matrimoniale, anche se ne riconosceva la difficoltà in una società in cui non si prevedevano comportamenti anomali. Il matrimonio veniva connotato al negativo: "Mirate, che bella ventura d'una Donna è il maritarsi: perder la robba, perder se stessa, e non acquistar nulla se non li figliuoli che le danno travaglio e l'imperio d'un'uomo, che la domini a sua voglia" (69).

Ma nel *Floridoro* non è politicamente desiderabile creare una eroina irrecuperabile perché è necessario che essa assuma un ruolo dinastico e garantisca la sua successione in conformità con le codificazioni del genere cavalleresco. Perciò, e questo è il secondo motivo per cui, per me, Fonte rimane nella tradizione, sappiamo quasi subito che Risamante si sposerà. Ma sorprendentemente, nel momento stesso in cui è posto come indispensabile, il vincolo matrimoniale è descritto come inutile: l'uomo destinato a Risamante, il re di Cipro, vien presto messo in chiaro, non dominerà lei, come è evidente che Rinaldo farebbe con Armida nel Tasso e come, con molta probabilità, farebbe Ruggiero nel *Furioso*. Invece, se prendiamo per seria la narrazione della profezia di Delfi, questo cavaliere si distingue proprio per la sua posizione subalterna: non emette mai un'opinione, ed è stato perfino vinto da un guerriero famoso non tanto per le sue azioni quanto per l'instabilità dei suoi scopi. In parole povere, questo marito non vale la pena di averlo: nel mondo eroico in cui si muove, lui è letteralmente una non entità e la Fonte non si cura nemmeno di identificarlo con un nome proprio.

Anche in quanto a figli il conto torna diversamente. Se a Bradamante veniva annunciato dal mago Merlino il suo futuro concepimento di un figlio dal nome doppiamente "altro", Ruggierino, figlio di Ruggiero, a Risamante viene rivelato proletticamente che avrà una figlia il cui nome, Salarisa, riprenderà, a quanto se ne può sapere, solo il suo: "Del re di Cipro sia da te concetta / Unica figlia, Salarisa detta" (III, 44). Se quindi per Bradamante la maternità confermava l'accesso completo alla sua femminilità e la rinuncia a qualsiasi desiderio conflittuale o improprio (in termini freudiani la donna, nel passaggio edipico,

sublima la sua libido per il padre con la speranza di avere, attraverso un figlio, quello che il padre ha), per Risamante il "risarcimento" ha poco di fallico.

Biondaura, l'esatto pari della gemella Risamante in quanto a grazie, è decisamente il suo opposto nel modo in cui le usa per garantirsi potere. Ultima discendente di figure femminili contente di essere oggetto di desiderio, Biondaura riesce ad avere dalla sua parte i migliori guerrieri nella lotta contro la sorella appunto perché vende metaforicamente la sua bellezza a fini personali. È adesso interessante notare che Biondaura, così abbondantemente presente nel testo come voce, non vi appare mai fisicamente. In questo senso lei illustra perfettamente il ruolo della donna come assenza nell'immaginario maschile (la gemella Risamante rappresenta naturalmente l'altra faccia della medaglia, la donna come superpresenza, minaccia). Assenza nel senso di soggetto, beninteso, perché come oggetto di desiderio, come corpo fantasizzato, è appunto il suo non esserci nella rappresentazione che giustifica quella spirale di violenza attraverso cui i suoi innamorati riconfermano la loro mascolinità e stabiliscono, come suggerivo nel caso di Celsidea, la loro identità. Macandro, per esempio, va dall'Armenia alla Grecia per dimostrare con le armi che Biondaura, di cui è innamorato, è la più bella di quella parte del continente, e quindi lui non è solo il più fortunato tra gli uomini ma anche il più forte.⁴⁵ È questo il *plot* con cui *Floridoro* inizia, ricollegandosi a tanti altri esempi del genere. Risamante, sfidandolo, raddrizzerà le cose dimostrandogli che il suo errore non è tanto quello di essersi messo a combattere per la bellezza della sua donna (la molla, come dicevo, della omosocialità maschile, con cui lei, come donna, ha poco da spartire) quanto che la sua donna ha sposato la causa sbagliata, quella di vittimizzare, in nome di una discutibile decisione paterna, il suo doppio fisico e psicologico, la gemella.

Vale a questo punto la pena di vedere come la storia delle due sorelle prima reduplichi e poi si distacchi da quella di due altre sorelle ariostesche, Logistilla e Alcina, anche qui l'una il completo opposto dell'altra. Come Biondaura, Alcina aveva usurpato la terra alla sorella, terra che il padre aveva dato a Logistilla perché unica figlia legittima. Logistilla è "pudica e santa" (*OF* VI, 46) alla maniera di Risamante, ma Fonte si rifiuta di creare in Biondaura un'altra Alcina "iniqua e scelerata". Biondaura è manipolatrice, non mangiatrice di uomini; politicamente adepta, ma non al punto di donare il suo corpo indiscriminatamente; è contenta dell'amore di Macandro, ma non lo ricambia perché il suo scopo non è di provvedersi di un compagno o di un pari nell'amministrazione del suo regno, ma di mettere riparo all'aggressività ("qualche strano intoppo" I, 11) della sorella. Inoltre, la punizione fisica finale

⁴⁵ Cornelia, in *Il merito delle donne*, dirà che bisogna stare attenti a credere a quello che gli uomini hanno detto e scritto sulle donne perché perfino quando le lodano essi sono alla ricerca di una affermazione personale ("rare volte ne dicono ben, ma laudano il lor sesso in generale e in particolare per laudar se medesmi", p. 41) Cornelia naturalmente aveva visto bene: tutta la poesia petrarchesca è una conferma di questa razionalizzazione.

che cade di solito tanto violentemente su figure di donne sessualmente liberate (si pensi all'Alcina sdentata e canuta), non viene nemmeno immaginata per lei. In altre parole, Fonte, donna, trova improponibile creare donne che si buttano via o sono buttate via con *nonchalance*.

Vorrei adesso suggerire che questa inimicizia, questa invidia, tra le due gemelle è solo a prima analisi tale. Quello che Risamante e Biondaura vogliono è chiaramente la stessa cosa, ma è soltanto litigando per conquistarsela che esse possono identificarsi in maniera narcisistica l'una con l'altra e riunire, per così dire simbioticamente, la loro parte maschile e femminile. Risamante combatte contro Biondaura prima di tutto per affermare, trasgredendo la decisione paterna, che il regno degli avi deve essere ereditato in maniera uguale perché identico è lo stato anagrafico delle due sorelle. In questo modo la sua identità è affermata attraverso un processo di differenziazione, per cui, cercando di mostrare il suo valore con una vittoria armata, lei proclama la sua differenza postedipica tra sé come soggetto e l'altro da sé come oggetto, cioè, in termini narrativi, tra il suo io e quello di una sorella che fisicamente passerebbe per lei, ma la cui mancanza di *pietas* la mette specularmente al suo opposto. Secondariamente, è soltanto desiderando di avere quello che la sorella vuole, attraverso un processo emulativo, che Risamante può ritrovarsi nel suo doppio in una unità preedipica e quindi annullare la presente differenza nel simbolico rituffandosi nell'immaginario materno (è stato solo alla morte della madre che la "morte" di Risamante è stata accettata/ratificata dal padre). In ambedue i casi il risultato è lo stesso: sia cercando di differenziarsi da Biondaura che cercando di imitarla, Risamante entra in contatto con l'altra parte di sé — non il suo altro, ma il suo quasi uguale — e così stabilisce la propria identità e la sua interezza di soggetto. Lo sguardo dell'altra, come nelle due occasioni in cui, togliendosi l'elmetto, viene scambiata per la sorella creando un effetto freudianamente *unheimlich*, è, in ultima analisi, il suo. Il motivo per il quale il *Floridoro* finisce senza spiegazioni proprio al punto in cui, avendo sconfitto la sorella, la *quête* è finita e Risamante si trova davanti all'unica scelta tematicamente saggia, quella di eliminarla (per tutto il testo era stata occupata a reclutare aiuti contro di lei), è un'indicazione forse del fatto che siamo arrivati a un'*impasse*: quello che sembra indispensabile da un punto di vista narrativo la Fonte lo trova improponibile da un punto di vista psicologico.

Anche l'altro *Leit-motiv* del patrimonio cavalleresco, la figura dell'amante abbandonata — e qui Didone troneggia nel mondo classico, ma ci sono esempi del tipo dappertutto, da Olimpia e Alcina in Ariosto a Armida in Tasso — è visitato nel *Floridoro* diversamente. Le donne infatti non sono mai abbandonate; se gli uomini le lasciano, è per andare a cercare rinforzi per liberarle. E spesso sono altre donne, come nella storia di Nicobaldo e Lucimena, che promettono di venire a salvare la donzella in pericolo. Le donne, inoltre, rimangono oggetto di desiderio per gli uomini siano o non siano vergini, un trattamento questo non certo tipico, data la loro solita resa letteraria, se vergini o verginee, di oggetti

sessualmente inaccessibili e perciò doppiamente desiderabili, e se non vergini, di oggetti temporaneamente necessari alla crescita sessuale dell'eroe protagonista, ma eventualmente messi da parte. Basti pensare, nel primo caso, a tutta la poesia petrarchesca e ad Angelica fino all'incontro con Medoro e, nel secondo, ai moti di orrore di Ruggiero una volta che il suo intralazzo con Alcina diventa un peso narrativo.

Quando queste donne sono descritte fisicamente, inoltre, il rendimento non è voyeuristico. Nel secondo canto del *Floridoro*, per esempio, Fonte offre una caratterizzazione di Risamante quanto mai fedele alla tradizione:

Si tolse l'elmo e scoprì le bionde
 Chiome dell'or più terse e luminose,
 E due stelle apparir tanto gioconde
 Che per invidia il sol nel mar s'ascese,
 Movea le guance fresche e rubiconde
 Invidia ai gigli e alle purpuree rose,
 La man che disarmata anco tenea
 La neve di candor vincer pareva.
 (II, 26).

Ma nel contesto del canone petrarchesco da cui appunto la Fonte prende le mosse, c'è come si vede e sorprendentemente solo un elemento che viene aggiunto alla descrizione della faccia: la mano. Adesso, per ritornare all'Ariosto, tra la faccia e la mano abbiamo il più delle volte trovato il seno delle varie protagoniste: si pensi al "petto colmo e largo" (VII, 14) di Alcina, alle "crudette pome" (X, 96) di Angelica e alle "poppe ritondette" (XI, 68) di Olimpia, per non dire niente di quella parte corporea che Ariosto si rifiuta timidamente di nominare, ma a cui non può non accennare ("Di quelle parti debbovi dir anche, / che pur celare ella bramava invano?" XI, 69). Qui invece la Fonte elimina la possibilità di sessualizzare la rappresentazione femminile scegliendo di darci un incontro pubblico, re incluso, invece di uno a tu per tu tra il cavaliere e la guerriera.

La donna non viene quindi a essere confrontata con una dinamica di desiderio che inevitabilmente la riscriverebbe come corpo, oggetto di piacere scopofilico controllato dallo sguardo libidinale maschile, ma come soggetto perché è solo adesso che il nome di Risamante viene rivelato e la sua genealogia spiegata (II, 30-36). Invece di una scena d'innamoramento che segue i fantasmi dell'immaginario maschile abbiamo un momento epico di costituzione/riconoscimento del soggetto: l'eroe preannunciato dagli eventi fin dal primo canto ("avresti / Visto un guerrier d'aspetto ardito e franco / Quindi passar con belle e ricche vesti" I, 51) è finalmente annunciato in maniera catartica, teatrale: "Risamante per nome s'appella" (II, 30). In altre parole, da cavaliere errante (la prima immagine di Risamante è quella di un guerriero pronto a lottare per difendere i diritti di una donna), passiamo a un cavaliere *en quête*

reale: la decisione di riprendersi il regno è dichiarata, il metodo delineato: "Armata ogni città cerca, ogni regno, / E giova a questo e a quel perché le tante / Sue cortesie dian opra al suo disegno, / Fa beneficio a questo e a quel signore, / Perché al bisogno suo le dia favore" (II, 36).

Nessun discorso cavalleresco, finalmente, può mancare di cimentarsi con la figura dell'ammaliatrice, l'incarnazione del "problema" donna. Anche qui Fonte ci offre, più o meno consciamente, una revisione dei miti. Come si sa, Ariosto aveva deciso di liberarsi di Alcina una volta che Ruggiero aveva imparato la lezione sui pericoli delle gratificazioni sessuali indiscriminate e aveva denunciato la sua femminilità come una mascherata; Tasso, da parte sua, aveva preferito lasciare le cose sull'ambiguo promuovendo Armida come figura di "ancella" ma non dicendoci nulla di più sulla sua futura possibile relazione con Rinaldo. Fonte crea Circetta, figlia di Circe e di Ulisse, dalle grazie magicalmente eterne ma dai "lumi onesti e santi" (V, 39), che di magico sembra avere molto all'inizio, ma che si mostra essenzialmente una brava donna alla fine.⁴⁶ Vedendola alla maniera ariostesca tramutare un uomo in albero e poi dirigersi verso un palazzo magico custodito da appropriati animali selvaggi, ci aspetteremmo che lei seduca i suoi due nuovi compagni. Niente del genere succede. Non solo Circetta, "vergine pudica" (XI, 91), si mette a aiutare gli uomini che avrebbe dovuto abbindolare, ma si trasforma presto in una figura di Melissa ariostesca quando, prendendo una veste allegorica, comincia a descrivere le sculture del suo palazzo.

Che la Fonte non cerchi nemmeno di portare l'episodio di Circetta a una sua epifania non deve stupirci. Secondo me l'episodio non è concludibile perché non c'è precedente in letteratura a cui ricollegarsi. Se la seduttrice è necessaria perché il suo smascheramento costituisce l'apice del movimento di crescita sessuale dell'eroe, come fa una scrittrice a pensare il suo essere femminile come ripugnante quando l'eroe che lei sta descrivendo non ha più bisogno di lei?⁴⁷ Se l'ammaliatrice, appunto perché in possesso di arti magiche, e quindi capace di gestire la propria sessualità, sovverte l'economia libidinale mettendo così in questione la superiorità maschile nel rapporto di coppia, pericolo a cui

⁴⁶ Sulla femminilità come maschera messa su dalla donna in Ariosto per nascondere la propria mascolinità o per apparire come si preferisce si appaia in cultura, si veda Valeria Finucci, "The Female Masquerade: The Game of Desire in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*," in *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*, a c. di Valeria Finucci e Regina Schwartz, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1994.

⁴⁷ Gli esempi sono non solo nel *Furioso* ma anche in *L'Italia liberata dai Goti* del Trissino, per esempio, in cui Acratia, una volta smascherata, emana lo stesso puzzo di cui Machiavelli si era lamentato nella sua lettera a Luigi Guicciardini ("Spectabili viro L. Guicciardini in Mantova tanquam fratri carissimo") dopo l'incontro con la prostituta lavandaia: "E, come prima aperse la bocca, n'uscì un fiato sì puzzolente, che, trovandosi offesi da queste peste due porte di dua sdegnoisissimi sensi, li occhi e il naso, e messi a tale sdegno, che lo stomaco, per non poter sopportare tale offesa, tutto si commosse". In Niccolò Machiavelli, *Lettere*, a c. di Giuseppe Lesca, Firenze, Rinascimento del libro, 1929, 25-28, p. 27. Per un esempio ancora più spettacolare, rimando all'episodio dantesco della "femmina balba" in *Purgatorio* 19: 7-9.

l'eroe/autore reagisce con costruzioni punitive della sessualità altrui, in che senso può un'autrice abbracciare la mistica della donna come pericolo? Cosa fare del resto con una maga, se non farle sedurre uomini? Fonte connota il *topos* in direzione positiva in questo episodio, ma la sua inabilità a arrivare a un punto di approdo narrativo, e quindi a scegliere una linea comportamentale ideologicamente precisa per Circetta, ci dice molto sul peso di costrutti culturali riprodotti così di *routine* in testi letterari.

La sua mano è più sicura quando si cimenta con l'episodio di Nicobaldo che rifiuta le *avances* sessuali di una maga perché innamorato di sua moglie, caso non molto tipico nel mondo cavalleresco dato che la fedeltà sessuale maschile verso maghe disposte a tutto è tradizionalmente presentata come impossibile, ammesso pure che fosse desiderabile: Ruggiero, per esempio, rimane invischiato con Alcina anche se innamorato di Bradamante e anche se messo in guardia ripetutamente in precedenza. Il "no" di Nicobaldo è inoltre diverso da quello di Filandro nell'episodio di Gabrina dell'*Orlando furioso*: in Ariosto il giovane aveva rifiutato la tentazione sessuale per non rompere il patto di fede e di amicizia con un altro uomo (XXI, 26), ma qui è per non romperlo con una donna. E anche la tentatrice si rivela alla fine, come Circetta, un essere solidamente morale perché si pente delle sue mire erotiche e decide di aiutare Nicobaldo a uscire di prigione: "E perché ancor conosci che m'importi / Quanto mi preme il fallo c'ho commesso, / Io ti prometto a rischio por mia vita / Per dar (se posso) anco a tua donna aita" (VI, 74). Siamo di fronte all'espressione di una sessualità femminile che riflette una quanto mai tipica adesione a modelli culturali? È probabile, ma siccome la Fonte scriverà tra poco il suo trattato sul merito delle donne, tenderei a pensare che lei fosse più che conscia dei ruoli femminili in cultura. Perciò farei un'altra ipotesi, e cioè che invece siamo davanti al riconoscimento di una soggettività "altra" che è messa in grado di interiorizzare il potere e esteriorizzare il desiderio, incluso quello erotico, in maniera diversa.

Sarebbe indubbiamente scorretto leggere in positivo le varie trasformazioni dei *topoi* che la Fonte usa senza mettere in chiaro che, addizionandole l'una all'altra in un *continuum* strutturale, queste trasformazioni sono a volte solo fini a se stesse. Quel che manca a Fonte non è la *verve* creativa o il piacere dell'intreccio, quanto uno schema valido, alla maniera dell'Ariosto. Se è vero infatti che l'intreccio ariostesco era stato censurato ripetutamente, nei decenni successivi alla pubblicazione del *Furioso*, per la sua struttura divagante e dispersiva, nessuno ha mai messo in dubbio che il poeta ferrarese fosse pienamente e sorprendentemente in controllo del suo materiale. È raro nel *Furioso* trovare una storia non conclusa o un personaggio di cui non sappiamo il destino.⁴⁸ Ma

⁴⁸ Due esempi in tal senso mi vengono in mente: quello di Ferraú, che sparisce dopo l'incontro armato con Bradamante, e quello della messaggera Ullania lasciata definitivamente alla fine

Fonte ha problemi a mettere un freno alla sua effusività e sembra procedere senza direzioni precise. Fin dal primo canto, per esempio, ci offre una vicenda strutturalmente poco necessaria all'economia del testo e per cui crea l'esigenza di un torneo che non avrà mai luogo: la regina di Dacia, vedova, racconta Fonte, è raggiunta dal cavaliere Amandriano, innamorato delle sue grazie, in combutta con il servo Parmino. Questi invano inventa la storia di un toro che emette gioielli per meglio abbindolarla (un altro prestito ariostesco dalla novella del giudice Anselmo nel Canto XLIII), perché verrà il mago Celidante a salvarla dalla violenza sessuale con l'imprigionamento in una piramide di cristallo del reo e del suo complice. Per liberarli (ma perché, visto che sono, appunto, rei?) molti cavalieri vengono a cimentarsi. Il rendimento è interessante, la caratterizzazione della donna sicura, ma non sappiamo né perché l'episodio sia inserito a questo punto né come finirà (I, 56-96).

Lo stesso vale per la seconda *fabula* del testo, à la *mode* della Ginevra ariostesca. Accusata ingiustamente dal cavaliere Lideo, disperatamente innamorato di lei, di avere ucciso lo zio, re Galbo d'Egitto, Raggidora, "bellissima vergine del Nilo" (II, 72), può dimostrarsi innocente dell'accusa solo se un cavaliere viene a prendere le sue difese e vince (II, 64 e IV, 49-66). Ma anche qui non abbiamo né un duello né una conclusione: Risardo decide di andare ad aiutarla, ma è presto sviato non una, ma due volte, da susseguenti interessi sentimentali, e del nano che chiede soccorsi non sappiamo più nulla. Fonte dimostra di aver capito perfettamente la tecnica dell'*entrelacement* e il meccanismo della *quête* ariostesca, ma non crea un blocco formale con relazioni simmetriche o speculari. Non si comprende, per esempio, la connessione di questa storia con le altre a livello morale, pseudo storico o sentimentale, o per lo meno la connessione è così vaga che è difficile da cogliere perché gli sviluppi sono periferici: Lideo è sì collegato all'episodio di Circetta perché suo fratello è trasformato da lei in albero (un altro prestito ariostesco dalla storia di Astolfo nell'isola di Alcina), e all'episodio di Celsidea perché un altro suo fratello, Stellidone, va a combattere nel torneo in suo onore (V, 50), ma i riferimenti non rimandano a sviluppi ulteriori né aiutano ad approfondire la conoscenza degli altri personaggi.

Eppure Fonte personalmente, nell'unica caratterizzazione di sé come autrice del *Floridoro* (caratterizzazione in cui rifiuta di nominarsi per pudore — modestamente — come il suo nome e pseudonimo indicano) dichiara che il suo problema non era di cosa scrivere ma come scrivere, avendo già idee precise sul disegno dell'opera che stava elaborando:

Nell'ultima facciata, che scolpita
Di dietro fu dove era poca luce,

Una giovane stavasi romita
 E non ardia con gli altri uscir in luce,
 Vergognandosi assai che troppo ardita
 Aspirasse alla via ch'al ciel conduce,
 Avendo tanto basso e fosco ingegno
 Quanto sublime e chiaro era il disegno.

Bianca avea indosso e lunga la gonnella
 Come allo stato virginal conviensi,
 E pareva in età verde e novella
 Aver nel petto alti pensier accensi.
 Non avea breve alcun questa donzella
 Che la fesse palese agli altri sensi,
 Ch'allo scultor che la sua effigie esprese
 Grato non fu che 'l nome si sapesse.
 (X, 36-37).

Adesso si potrebbe far l'ipotesi che la logica narrativa edipica lineare a cui siamo abituati non necessariamente fa appello a una scrittrice impegnata a rivisitare il genere. In questo caso, tenendo alta la bandiera del femminismo e il desiderio del recupero totale delle scrittrici alla tradizione letteraria, si potrebbe leggere coerenza dove c'è frammentazione e trovare una ragione alle rotture problematiche: il lettore simpatetico, come un chirurgo, conscio della particolarità del modello offerto, rattopperebbe allora i buchi nel libro della Fonte e creerebbe un testo continuo e seducente da una narrativa che iperbolicamente e radicalmente rifiuta di farsi assimilare. Ma io vorrei mettere da parte la creatività di chi legge e ridare la penna a chi scrive e suggerire perciò un'altra spiegazione: che la difficoltà nell'unire e nel concludere della Fonte è più il risultato di una scelta personale che di mancanza di abilità tecnica. In altre parole, dal momento che la messa in atto del desiderio tipica di ogni racconto è un momento liberatorio, la Fonte è riuscita a eliminare lo stadio dell'(auto)censura, credo, solo scegliendo più o meno esplicitamente di non concludere. Quindi si è messa in grado di costruire ruoli attraenti o inusitati per protagoniste femminili, per esempio, e ruoli ambigualmente passivi per quelli maschili perché poteva rimandare a un futuro che fortunatamente sapeva non sarebbe mai venuto, e quindi a un futuro psicologicamente poco minaccioso, la possibilità di censurare queste scelte e normalizzare le caratterizzazioni trasgressive in nome di una conclusione "logica". In questo modo Fonte poteva esorcizzare l'ansietà che le veniva dal dover politicamente rispettare la forma esteriore di un genere letterario di successo nello stesso momento in cui si sentiva poco desiderosa di riscriverne alla lettera le norme rappresentazionali.

Che cosa è in conclusione *Tredici Canti del Floridoro*? Un romanzo fallito? Un'epica inconclusa? Un esperimento giovanile? Naturalmente è tutte queste cose fermo restando però che il giudizio, qualunque esso sia, si fonda sempre e

comunque su un modo normativo di vedere il genere cavalleresco che, penso di aver dimostrato, non è detto possa essere usato indipendentemente dal sesso degli scrittori. È *Tredici canti del Floridoro* una fantasia femminista? Certamente è anche questo, perché se è vero, come affermavano i neoplatonici, e con buona pace di Roland Barthes, che l'unità può essere metaforizzata come la narrativa del padre e la molteplicità come la narrativa della madre, allora si può dire che Fonte ha scritto alla fin fine l'unica narrativa che le veniva facile da scrivere, da donna: ampie digressioni, ambivalenze, incoerenze, mancanza di distanza, frammentazioni e conclusioni posticipate abbondano infatti nel *Floridoro*. In questo senso, abbiamo davanti una scrittura in nome della molteplicità, all'Ariosto certamente, ma senza quella sistematicità "maschile" ariostesca, per rimanere nella metafora neoplatonica, che inevitabilmente faceva muovere le fila del *Furioso* verso plausibili conclusioni. Questo però ci porterebbe a un discorso essenzializzante e ad affermare, come è stato fatto, che la biologia è determinante nella costituzione dell'io individuale.

Vorrei invece spostare l'enfasi sull'immaginario culturale perché solo così, credo, è possibile registrare la differenza — lo straniamento — che una scrittrice porta ai vari generi letterari, a livello sia testuale che tematico. Nel caso della Fonte tale differenza, penso di avere dimostrato, va colta nella mancanza di desiderio, o forse nell'incapacità a riscrivere, di volta in volta, anche volendolo, quello che la tradizione tramandava. Sarebbe facile adesso mettere da parte questa riscrittura piena di aporie e leggere in essa la conferma che il *Floridoro*, nel suo tentativo di legittimarsi costantemente come progenie ariostesca, è nient'altro che un'opera minore. Allora invece di registrare il fatto, come avevo ipotizzato all'inizio, che la partecipazione femminile è stata ignorata nel campo della letteratura cavalleresca, si potrebbe continuare a ripetere che le donne, anche quando si sono fatte visibili con la penna, hanno scritto poco che valesse la pena di leggere, allora e adesso. Perfino una lettura aperta a una "poetics of gender" come penso sia questa, si affermerebbe così, ha problemi a dimostrare la capacità della Fonte a reggere il confronto con i suoi contemporanei, minori inclusi. Ma io credo che siano proprio queste incoerenze a offrire, retrospettivamente, un'altra chiave di lettura e a dimostrare non solo quanto diversamente le donne possano percepire le convenzioni intrinseche ai vari generi letterari e quanto contraddittoriamente possano dividerne gli scenari, ma quanto difficile sia la strada per riscriverli, o inventarne di nuovi, e di più consoni, all'espressione della loro individualità e intellettualità.⁴⁹

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Un decennio di studi pulciani: 1984-1994*

Introduzione

Dalle ricerche svolte risulta che nel periodo che va dal gennaio del 1984 ai primi mesi del 1994 sono apparse, in Italia e altrove, numerose pubblicazioni dedicate a Luigi Pulci e alla sua opera.

Oltre alla ristampa dell'edizione del *Morgante* curata dal Fatini e a quella del *Morgante e Lettere* per opera di Domenico De Robertis, negli ultimi cinque anni sono uscite anche due nuove edizioni del capolavoro pulciano, la prima con l'accurato e esteso commento di Davide Puccini e la seconda, con un apparato critico più modesto, a cura di Giuliano Dego. Nel 1986 è stata anche stampata la tanto attesa edizione delle *Opere minori* del Pulci, ottimamente preparata da Paolo Orvieto.

Durante il decennio in questione sono stati dati alle stampe anche quattro libri: il saggio del Carrai, dedicato ai fratelli Luca e Luigi Pulci; la breve monografia del Gareffi sulla figura dell'eroe nel *Morgante*; il volume della comparatista americana Constance Jordan che, presentato quale "first full-length study" in inglese sull'opera del poeta fiorentino, si è purtroppo rivelato assai deludente e, recentissimamente, il *Morgante iperbolico* del giovane studioso svizzero Ruedi Ankli. Interessanti anche le pagine in cui Peter Vassallo (*Byron. The Italian Literary Influence*) esamina l'influenza del Pulci sulla formazione letteraria di Byron. A queste pubblicazioni si affiancano più di trenta articoli, di varia lunghezza e importanza. Non sorprende infine il fatto che il 1984 sia l'anno che ha visto la maggior fioritura di studi pulciani.

Nel presentare questa rassegna desideriamo indicare alla particolare attenzione dei lettori il saggio di Paolo Orvieto "Sul rapporto *Morgante-Orlando* Laurenziano". Non ci consta infatti che questo scritto, apparso in Germania nel 1989, abbia avuto fra i critici pulciani tutta la diffusione che merita. Lo studioso inglese Mark Davie nella sua recensione al *Pulci medievale — Modern Language Review* 74 (October 1980): 910-11 — lamentava il fatto che l'Orvieto, dopo aver proposto la tesi del ribaltamento della "accepted relationship between *Morgante* and *Orlando*", si fosse rifiutato di discuterla dichiarando di volerlo fare "in altra sede."

Ci pare che con il suo seminale articolo del 1989 l'Orvieto, rispondendo ai legittimi "lamenti" del Davie, abbia altresì esposto i limiti della questione,

* Ringraziamo il collega ed amico Davy Carozza per i preziosi consigli e Molly Morrison per l'aiuto fornitoci quale "Library Research Assistant".

offrendo una plausibile soluzione a quello che si presenta come uno dei più affascinanti e controversi *puzzles* pulciani degli ultimi decenni.

Bibliografia

1984

Aurigemma, Marcello. "Mariani e gli studi sul *Morgante*." *Letteratura italiana contemporanea* V, 12 (maggio-agosto 1984): 314-19.

Riafferma l'importanza degli studi pulciani di Gaetano Mariani, in particolare del saggio *Il "Morgante" e i cantari trecenteschi* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1953), in cui il critico estende il raffronto, precedentemente operato dal Getto fra il *Morgante* e l'*Orlando*, ai testi dei canterini trecenteschi. Siffatto "minuzioso" raffronto permette, fra l'altro, al Mariani sia di individuare nel capolavoro pulciano il tentativo del poeta fiorentino di nobilitare culturalmente la tradizione popolare precedente, sia di sottolineare le differenze sostanziali esistenti fra l'ottava essenzialmente povera dei canterini e quella dinamica, coloristica e linguisticamente ricca del Pulci.

Gajetti, Vittorio. "Tematica della gola e morte di Margutte." *L'arte dell'interpretare: studi critici offerti a Giovanni Getto*. Cuneo: Arciere, 1984. 165-78.

Per il Gajetti, l'ingordigia che accomuna Morgante e Margutte stabilisce fra questi due personaggi un "rapporto inconsciamente ambiguo . . . percorso da un'intima e sottile tensione di tradimento collegata appunto alla problematica della gola". Certo il motivo del tradimento, introdotto e negato da Margutte al termine della sua professione di fede gastronomica, è ribadito anche da Morgante che, alludendo al suo battaglio, esorta il mezzo gigante a guardarsi dal tradirlo.

Se è vero che nell'episodio di Morgante e Margutte all'osteria del Dormi, il precario rapporto di "*sodalitas*" fra i due giganti si regge sul fatto che Margutte pone la sua furbizia a servizio della sbalorditiva voracità di Morgante, è altrettanto vero che, subito dopo, questa amicizia si fa più "problematica". Il critico infatti inferisce che gli scherzi e le beffe perpetrate da Morgante ai danni di Margutte, il quale nella sua reazione rivela un crescente, rabbioso disappunto, "assumono sfumature evidenti di un'intenzionalità derisoria e proditoria, oltre che punitoria". La volpina astuzia del mezzo gigante è del tutto impotente di fronte ad un Morgante "ingannatore nell'unico punto in cui la malizia di Margutte poteva essere sconfitta: la divorazione ciclopica". Tradito nella gola dal compagno, che gli fa soffrire anche la sete, Margutte viene così punito "per tutte le sue malizie e per la malvagità innata". La ragione per cui Margutte cerca l'amicizia di Morgante risiede forse nel fatto che il mezzo gigante vede nelle tremende capacità divoratorie del compagno, ch'egli non può non ammirare, un pericolo per la propria incolumità fisica. Margutte, che teme d'essere "ingoiato" da Morgante, sente quindi pesare su di sé "l'inconscia paura della minaccia

orcale”.

Affrontando il tema della morte di Margutte, il Gajetti acutamente osserva che è proprio “nell’atto del ridere che è insito l’istinto di morte”. Il Pulci, che non avrebbe certo potuto far morire Margutte di indigestione — soluzione “troppo ovvia e banale” e con implicazioni moralistiche certo estranee al sentire del poeta — lo fa invece morire dal troppo ridere causatogli dall’ultima burla di Morgante (che gli ha sfilato gli stivali nel sonno), l’unica “della quale anche lui [Margutte] potrà ridere”. Riguardo la natura del riso nel poema, il critico osserva infine che “per il Pulci il riso ha appunto un aspetto bifronte che nasce dall’ambivalenza: è felicità e dolore”. Ambivalenza che si riscontra anche nell’episodio della morte di Margutte il quale, come scrive il Pulci, “le risa raddoppia / e finalmente per la pena scoppia”.

Giamatti, Bartlett A. “Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen: An Essay on the Chivalric Epics of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto”. *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984. 33-75.

Ristampa del saggio apparso con lo stesso titolo nel volume *Italian Literature, Roots and Branches. Essays in Honor of T. G. Bergin*. A c. di G. Rimanelli and J. K. Achity. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976. 265-307.

Jordan, Constance. “The Ending of Pulci’s *Morgante*: The Poet as Vergil’s Gallus”. *Romanic Review* 75, 4 (November 1984): 399-413.

Convinta che un’attenta analisi della rappresentazione dei temi pastorali, contenuti nelle ottave 130-52 del cantare XXVIII del *Morgante*, documenti il cambiamento avvenuto nella mente del poeta durante la stesura dell’opera, la Jordan è dell’opinione che in queste ottave il Pulci “signals his disbelief in the possibility of a history celebrating the emperor Charlemagne, testifies to his interest in entertaining a notion of pastoral, and finally reveals that he rejects even this modest vision of the nature of his work”.

Mentre il riferimento a Lucrezia Tornabuoni segna il punto in cui il Pulci “begins to speak about the *Morgante* as a distinctly non-epic work”, l’ottava 138 evidenzia in vero la graduale tendenza del poeta a liberarsi dei “trappings” dell’epica per assumere il tono più semplice e evocativo della poesia pastorale. Le intenzioni espresse nell’ottava 141 denotano pertanto il proposito del Pulci di rappresentare “what certainly began as an epic-romance as something quite different”. Secondo la Jordan, l’autore del *Morgante*, completata nel 1483 l’ultima parte del poema, avrebbe creduto di poter riacquistare il favore del Magnifico rivelando il proponimento di cimentarsi nella poesia pastorale. Il Pulci, puntualizza il critico, certo non ignorava che questo genere letterario, di gran lunga favorito nei circoli medicei degli ultimi decenni del Quattrocento, era considerato una attività “politically correct”; chi si dedicava alla letteratura era

infatti meno portato ad immischiarsi negli affari politici di Firenze.

Nella seconda parte dell'articolo la Jordan rivolge la sua attenzione all'esame delle due reminiscenze virgiliane contenute nelle ottave 151 (7-8) e 152 (6-7). Considerando particolarmente complicata l'interpretazione dei versi della X ecloga, essa ritiene che il Pulci "has failed to clearly identify himself, . . . either with Vergil's pastoral poet, . . . or with Gallus himself". Pur ammettendo che sia possibile individuare nella persona di Gallo il Magnifico, oppure leggere le ultime ottave del *Morgante* come "a sophisticated imitation of Vergil's *Eclogues*," la Jordan sostiene l'ipotesi che il Pulci, includendo Gallo fra i suoi pastori, "colors his proposal with the ambivalence that in Vergil's poem allows one to question, with Gallus, the enterprise of writing pastoral at the very moment it is being proposed". Se si accetta quindi la tesi che il Pulci abbia seguito la logica del modello virgiliano, si può pertanto riconoscere in Gallo un aspetto "of the poet's own consciousness which anticipates the futility of his task, or his awareness of his patron's certain rejection of what he intends to offer".

Ricordato poi che nella prima ottava del *Morgante* il Pulci manifesta l'intenzione di parlare della vita di Carlomagno, al quale Firenze deve la sua grandezza, la Jordan asserisce che il silenzio del poeta sulle "virtù" dell'imperatore nel cantare XXVIII prova che il *Morgante*, anziché essere il poema modello che il Pulci intendeva inizialmente scrivere, è invece "a poem which examines a moment in history and finds a disjunction between the judgment advanced by tradition and authority, and the conclusion that might reasonably be drawn from evidence". L'intenzione del Pulci di dedicarsi alla poesia pastorale viene conseguentemente recepita come la percezione da parte del poeta del suo fallimento quale autore di un romanzo epico scritto a glorificazione di Carlomagno e atto a favorire il ritorno dell'età della cavalleria nella Firenze del suo tempo. Pur riconoscendo che le lettere del Pulci non rivelano se, o in che maniera, il disappunto del poeta si rifletta nell'imitazione delle ecloghe, per la Jordan queste reminiscenze virgiliane costituiscono nondimeno la base per poter identificare nella figura di Gallo lo stesso Pulci che esterna, anche se indirettamente, il proprio dolore. Considerate infine le implicazioni che l'imitazione della figura di Gallo comporta, la Jordan dubita persino che il Pulci sperasse di poter "accomplish by pastoral what had eluded him in epic-romance".

Pisoni, Pier Giacomo. "Luigi Pulci alla Cavallina: Agosto del '74". *Rinascimento* s. II, XXIV (1984): 149-52.

Riproduce il testo della lettera, precedentemente inedita, che Luigi Pulci inviò dalla Cavallina a Lorenzo de' Medici in data 11 agosto 1474. In essa il Pulci accenna ad un suo prossimo viaggio a Bologna e ritorna sulla vecchia questione del beneficio di Cintoia. Quasi al termine della stessa, lo scrivente comunica di aver fatto *una buona vihuola et bella*; cosa che, nota il Pisoni, "permette di pensare al Pulci come ad un appassionato di liuteria".

Pulci, Luigi. *Il Morgante*. A c. di G. Fatini. Torino: UTET, 1984.

Ristampa, in 2 voll. dell'edizione UTET del 1948.

Pulci, Luigi. *Morgante e lettere*. A c. di Domenico De Robertis. Firenze: Sansoni, 1984.

Ristampa, con modifiche riguardanti principalmente il testo delle *Lettere*, dell'edizione Sansoni del 1962.

Rati, Giancarlo. "Luigi Pulci e la critica (1944-1984)". *Cultura e scuola* XXIII 91 (Luglio-Settembre 1984): 7-24.

Partendo dal fondamentale studio di Giovanni Getto (1944) sulla lingua del *Morgante*, il Rati, ricordato l'apporto senza dubbio determinante delle ricerche critico-filologiche dell'Ageno culminate nell'edizione Ricciardi del *Morgante* (1955), riconosce al De Robertis il merito di aver illustrato, tramite un sistematico e accurato raffronto fra i primi 23 cantari del poema pulciano e il testo dell'*Orlando* (*Storia del "Morgante"*, 1958), la natura dell'arte del Pulci nel suo divenire e definirsi. Notevole pure il saggio del Ceserani "L'allegria fantasia del Pulci e il rifacimento dell'*Orlando*" (1958) che, diretto anch'esso ad investigare i rapporti di lingua e di stile fra il poema pulciano e l'*Orlando*, evidenzia la indubbia superiorità sintattica, lessicale e metrica del poeta fiorentino.

Il pubblico del *Morgante*, individuato dal De Robertis nei membri della brigata fiorentina, frequentatori con il Pulci del palazzo di via Larga, diviene invece per Angelo Gianni il popolo fiorentino (*Pulci uno e due*, 1967). Il Gianni, assertore di una maggiore aderenza del Pulci al gusto narrativo dei canterini, esclude inoltre che sussista nel *Morgante* "sia un intento di irrisione nei confronti della materia dei cantari, sia l'atteggiamento di distaccata 'condiscendenza' proprio di tanti componimenti popolareggianti della corte medicea".

Il più recente *Pulci medievale* (1978) di Paolo Orvieto, che il Rati definisce "una decisiva stimolante ripresa d'interesse per la realtà tutta letteraria del *Morgante*", ha come scopo precipuo quello di dimostrare la matrice medievale del capolavoro pulciano e di mettere a fuoco, rivedendo il rapporto con l'*Orlando*, le "non poche interferenze" esistenti fra quest'opera e i poemi cavallereschi contemporanei. Il Rati considera "suggestive", benché "tutte da verificare", sia le interpretazioni allegoriche dell'Orvieto nei riguardi di Margutte, di Morgante e di altri personaggi del poema, sia la "lettura in chiave allegorico-polemica" degli ultimi cinque cantari del *Morgante*. Per l'Orvieto, infatti, una corretta lettura di questi canti implica una distinzione precisa fra il materiale composto dal Pulci prima della sua polemica col Ficino e quello scritto o cambiato successivamente. Sono appunto questi cambiamenti di natura allegorico-polemica che renderebbero

possibile una "lettura enigmatica" dei suddetti canti dove il poeta nasconde "dietro il re Marsilio . . . il Ficino e dietro a Orlando, . . . a tratti, se stesso."

Nella seconda parte della sua rassegna il Rati osserva che il 1474 è l'anno in cui ebbe inizio la crisi del "magistero letterario" che il Pulci, grazie anche alle sue opere minori, esercitava sin dal 1461 a Firenze. Tale crisi fu appunto causata dalla disputa del poeta col prete Matteo Franco e, in misura di gran lunga maggiore, dall'aspra polemica del Pulci col Ficino, a proposito della quale il critico riporta l'interpretazione offerta dall'Orvieto nel suo articolo "Uno scandalo del '400: Luigi Pulci ed i sonetti di parodia religiosa". (*Annali di Italianistica*, 1983).

Menzionati gli studiosi che si sono occupati della controversa questione della religiosità del Pulci, il Rati condivide l'opinione del Ceserani per il quale "l'unica cosa accertabile . . . è l'opinione che i contemporanei ebbero della . . . ortodossia" del poeta. ("Studi sul Pulci", 1969). A proposito poi degli ultimi cinque cantari del *Morgante* (composti, secondo alcuni, su esortazione di Lucrezia Tornabuoni, per celebrare le imprese di Carlo Magno a favore della fede), il Rati, dopo aver ricordato la tesi del Carrai secondo la quale "la tragedia di Roncisvalle rappresenta in figura il giudizio universale" (*Rinascimento*, XVIII, 1978, 3-58), conclude la sua rassegna riaffermando la necessità sia dell'ulteriore approfondimento di vari aspetti della personalità del Pulci e della cultura della Firenze medicea, sia di una precisa definizione "delle opere e delle sezioni di opere sicuramente" del Pulci.

Ruggieri, Ruggero M. "Affinità di tematiche e di personaggi tra il *Milione* e il *Morgante*". *Symposium in honorem Prof. M. de Riquer*. Universitat de Barcelona, Quaderns Crema, 1984. 349-62.

Propone che sia possibile stabilire un parallelo fra *Il Milione* e il *Morgante*, opere il cui nucleo principale è la lotta contro l'Islamismo, nemico e dei cristiani e dei mongoli. In esse, benché distanti e diverse, il critico rinviene, documentandole, coincidenze e convergenze "non certo vistose ma multiple e in vari casi concordi e unificanti". L'importanza che le città di Babilonia e di Bagdad in quanto grandi centri della religione mussulmana hanno in entrambi i testi e, in particolare, i punti di contatto che si possono rinvenire ne *Il Milione* e nel *Morgante* riguardo alcuni personaggi maschili (il Veglio della Montagna, il Prete Gianni, Can di Gattaia) e femminili (Antea, Chiariella, Aigiaruc), inducono il Ruggieri a riconoscere nel capolavoro pulciano "una sua misteriosa e sottile (anche se talvolta nebulosa) atmosfera euro-asiatica".

Tusiani, Joseph. "From Pulci's *Morgante*". Forward A. N. Mancini. *Forum Italicum* 18, 1 (Spring 1984): 117-60.

Stimato poeta e autorevole traduttore del Boccaccio, del Tasso, di Michelangelo e di vari altri poeti da Dante a Marinetti, il Tusiani presenta, in occasione del

500mo anniversario della morte del Pulci, la prima traduzione inglese dei canti V e VII del *Morgante*. Nella prefazione Albert Mancini, notato lo scarso interesse degli studiosi di lingua inglese per il capolavoro pulciano, auspica che la completa versione inglese del *Morgante*, intrapresa da qualche tempo dal Tusiani, contribuisca a rendere "this interesting and crucial text available to a large English-reading public and invite the now more easy comparison with other great epics of the Renaissance".

Vassallo, Peter. *Byron. The Italian Literary Influence*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.

La questione del debito letterario del Byron nei riguardi del Pulci è affrontata per esteso alle pagine 140-65, dopo che il Vassallo, esaminata l'influenza di Dante, sostiene che il Byron ha derivato la nuova tecnica satirica che anima le ottantaquattro ottave del *Beppo*, non tanto dal Berni e dal Pulci, come molti ritengono, quanto dalle *Novelle galanti* di Giambattista Casti.

Ricordato che Milton aveva classificato il *Morgante* fra le opere comiche, se non proprio "scurrilous", lo studioso nota che l'interesse del Byron per il Pulci può essere fatto risalire all'*Orlando in Roncesvalle*, che John Herman Merivale aveva adattato dal *Morgante* e, in maggior misura, alla lettura di *Mr Whistlecraft* di John Hookahm Frere (i cui modelli erano stati il Berni e il Pulci) e, conseguentemente, a quella dell'*Histoire littéraire d'Italie* del Ginguené.

L'atteggiamento non facilmente definibile del Byron nei riguardi del Pulci spinge il Vassallo a ricercare i motivi che indussero il poeta inglese a tradurre il primo cantare del *Morgante*, mentr'egli stava componendo il III e il IV canto del *Don Juan*. Riconosciuto che l'intenso lavoro di traduzione intrapreso dal Byron nel tentativo di rendere lo spirito dell'originale "helped to stimulate his creative faculties at a period when he felt barren of inspiration", il critico ritiene che la ragione della scelta del Pulci è da cercarsi nella frase del Byron secondo la quale il *Morgante* "has been the original of some of the most celebrated productions on this side of the Alps, as well as those recent experiments in England".

Esaminata a confronto con il testo originale, la versione del Byron appare vicinissima al gusto del Pulci in quanto il poeta inglese sarebbe riuscito a trasfondere in essa "the Pulcian fluctuations of tone and tempo which have baffled so many of his readers."

Il Vassallo infine rintraccia e documenta l'influenza del Pulci — fatto sinora ignorato dalla critica — anche ne *The Vision of Judgement*, iniziato dal Byron un anno dopo l'invio della sua traduzione del *Morgante* a John Murray. I brani citati dal critico documenterebbero infatti che il "Pulci exercised a powerful hold on Byron's imagination during the composition of *The Vision of Judgement*, particularly in the humorous treatment of the delicate theme of eternal judgement and damnation". Se è vero che l'influenza diretta del poeta fiorentino si riscontra nella comica descrizione che il Byron fa di San Pietro (*Morgante*, XXV, 91), non meno profonda, anche se meno ovvia, è l'influenza pulciana nella delineazione

del carattere di Satana, che rivela strette affinità con l'Astarotte del Pulci.

A conclusione del suo studio il Vassallo scrive: "It was above all Pulci's serio-comic style - with its intricate blending of *chiaroscuro* effects on the canvas of life - that Byron found so congenial in his crusade against the moral cant of the day".

1985

Carrai Stefano. *Le muse dei Pulci: studi su Luca e Luigi Pulci.* Napoli: Guida, 1985.

Come lo stesso Carrai nota nell'introduzione, sette dei dieci capitoli de *Le muse dei Pulci* ripropongono, con poche aggiunte, la maggior parte delle quali di natura bibliografica, sette saggi pubblicati fra il 1978 e il 1985 in *Rinascimento e Interpres*. Di questi, il primo tratta della datazione della prima *pistola* di Luca Pulci; il quarto contiene l'edizione ed il commento della novella del "besso" senese, che il Carrai fa risalire ai primi mesi del 1471; il quinto riesamina l'aspra disputa del Pulci con Matteo Franco precisandone le date; il sesto presenta, corredate di un ampio commento, due poesie inedite di Luigi Pulci tratte da un codice della Biblioteca Comunale di Arezzo; l'ottavo, intitolato "Il giudizio universale nel *Morgante*", evidenzia la caratterizzazione allegorica degli ultimi cantari del poema; il nono colloca la composizione della *Confessione* di Luigi nel periodo febbraio 1483-agosto 1484, formulando l'ipotesi che nel "Cherubino" menzionato in questo poemetto in terzine si possa individuare il Savonarola; e il decimo in cui il critico, in uno dei personaggi ritratti nell'*Approvazione della regola di San Francesco* del Ghirlandaio, identifica non Luigi Pulci, bensì Bernardo Michelozzi.

Del tutto inediti, invece, i saggi che costituiscono il secondo capitolo, dal titolo "Imitazione e reminiscenze ovidiane nelle *Pistole* di Luca"; il terzo, che riproduce il testo annotato dell'inedito prontuario mitologico del Pulci; e il settimo, in cui la figura di Morgante viene riallacciata al mito di Ercole.

Le muse dei Pulci è stato oggetto di ampie e particolareggiate recensioni, fra le quali desideriamo ricordare quelle, decisamente positive, di R. Ballerini — *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 33 (ottobre 1986): 191-201 —, di M. Chiesa — "Rassegna bibliografica". *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* CLXIV, 525 (1987): 112-19 — e di G. Ponte — *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* 92, 1 (1988): 159-61. Più circospetto, invece, il giudizio di Walter Stephens del Darmouth College — *Renaissance Quarterly* 41, 4 (1988): 737-39. Dopo aver dichiarato che i tre capitoli inediti del libro "are not important enough in themselves to justify rote republication of the other essays", il critico americano accoglie invece con favore la ristampa del saggio riprodotto nell'ottavo capitolo, anche se reputa un po' esagerato il significato dei paralleli fra Orlando e Cristo nel *Morgante*. Lo Stephens, che non apprezza l'ipotesi iconografica del Carrai ritenendola in essenza "an otiose re-refutation" dell'identificazione inizialmente proposta da Aby Warburg, conclude la sua breve recensione esprimendo la

speranza che lo studioso italiano continui la sua attività di curatore e commentatore delle opere dei fratelli Pulci.

Davie, Mark. "Biography and Romance: The *Vita Caroli Magni* of Donato Acciaiuoli and Luigi Pulci's *Morgante*". *The Spirit of the Court*. Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society (Toronto 1983). A c. di G. S. Burgess and R. A. Taylor. Dover, NH: D. S. Brewer, 1985. 137-52.

Dopo aver rilevato le similarità concernenti la datazione e le circostanze della composizione della *Vita Caroli Magni* e del *Morgante*, il Davie afferma che l'Acciaiuoli e il Pulci "were prompted to bring their particular literary genre . . . to bear on the figure of Charlemagne, in the hope of finding in him a theme which was relevant to the contemporary political and diplomatic situation".

Subito dopo, il critico nota che nel trattato dell'Acciaiuoli esistono evidenti inconsistenze nella rappresentazione di Carlomagno, ora convenzionalmente ritratto quale sovrano saggio, pacifico e amato dai sudditi, ora più realisticamente raffigurato quale eroe, perennemente in guerra per domare ribellioni e accrescere il suo potere. Cosciente di queste inconsistenze, l'Acciaiuoli cerca di giustificarle sostenendo che le continue campagne militari di Carlomagno erano necessarie per la difesa dei deboli, della Chiesa e del papato (ragione questa della seconda spedizione dell'imperatore in Italia, in occasione della quale avrebbe avuto luogo il suo leggendario intervento a favore di Firenze, ricordato dal Pulci).

Mentre però l'Acciaiuoli, scrive il Davie, riesce a fornire un ritratto di Carlomagno in cui si concilia "the monarchist ideal of the Holy Roman Empire with the Florentines' jealousy of their liberties", il Pulci inizia a raccontare la vita del sovrano francese "in the terms prescribed by Lucrezia and announced in his opening stanzas" solo nell'ultima parte del poema, per di più composta "some twenty years after beginning the *Morgante*". Per il Davie i primi indizi dell'intenzione riabilitatoria del Pulci si riscontrano nel canto XXIV, dapprima all'ottava 35, dove Carlomagno non è più raffigurato come il vecchio "rimbambito" dei primi ventitré cantari, e poi alle ottave 128-129, in cui si afferma che le imprese del vecchio Carlo non sono state ancora adeguatamente celebrate. È solo nel cantare XXVIII, però, che il Pulci, arrivato ormai al termine della sua opera e in risposta alle critiche che gli erano state fatte, cerca di rimediare ai danni che il suo non certo lusinghiero ritratto dell'imperatore aveva provocato. A riprova il Davie adduce i versi in cui il Pulci spiega la natura dell'amicizia di Carlomagno per Gano e, molto più indicative, le ottave in cui, parafrasando dalla *Vita* dell'Acciaiuoli, il poeta racconta per sommi capi la vita e le imprese del sovrano, finendo poi con l'accennare alla possibilità di cantarne più meritevolmente le gesta in un'altra opera, il *Ciriffo Calvaneo*. Secondo il Davie, la prima e la seconda parte del *Morgante* riflettono il cambiamento verificatosi nella cultura della Firenze medicea durante il periodo che va dal 1465

al 1480 circa. Riferendosi specificatamente ai versi 5-8 dell'ottava 136, il critico, concludendo, afferma che nonostante "all his attempts at writing a serious historical epic in his second poem, he [Pulci] was right to reassess at the end that the good-natured giant Morgante was still his presiding genius".

Jonard, Norbert. "La Nature du comique dans le *Morgante* de Pulci". *Culture et société en Italie du Moyen-Age à la Renaissance. Hommage à André Rochon*. Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1985. 83-101.

Non convinto che gli studiosi che si sono occupati della questione della maggiore o minore serietà del *Morgante* siano riusciti a darci "une connaissance satisfaisante de Pulci" (le tesi da questi formulate o sostengono che il riso del poeta fiorentino nasce dalla satira degli ideali cavallereschi e umanistici oppure vedono in esso soltanto lo scopo di divertire), lo Jonard si propone di "tenter une synthèse des différents travaux pour suggérer quelques hypothèses de recherche".

Definito il riso "un phénomène non seulement esthétique mais socio-historique", il critico francese dichiara che per pervenire ad una più adeguata interpretazione del *Morgante* bisogna collocare il capolavoro pulciano all'interno di quella "culture comique qui, burgeoise dans son essence, populaire dans ses formes, va du Moyen Age à la Renaissance". Dal momento che i cantari popolari — nei quali lo spirito di avventura appare prevalere sull'etica cavalleresca — riflettono il crescente declino della nobiltà fiorentina, risulta difficile capire per quale motivo il Pulci avrebbe voluto operare la satira degli ideali cavallereschi cari ad una classe alla quale la borghesia aveva ormai tolto quasi ogni potere.

Il confronto fra il poema del Pulci e l'*Orlando* dimostra che l'elemento comico, già presente nel cantare popolare, acquista nel *Morgante* un ruolo talmente determinante da poterlo definire "la métaphore comique" dell'*Orlando*. Il Pulci però si servirebbe di questo testo per motivi puramente linguistici e non per fare la satira dei cantastorie. In polemica col Momigliano, lo Jonard sostiene inoltre che il riso del Pulci non deriva dalla natura dei suoi personaggi, considerati "fantoques sans consistance", bensì dalle situazioni in cui essi sono ritratti e dalla lingua altamente pittoresca ed espressiva dell'autore, "poète qui joue sur et avec les mots".

Per lo Jonard l'uso sistematico che il Pulci fa dell'iperbole non è certo sufficiente a definire la natura della comicità del *Morgante*. A tale fine egli reputa necessario "quitter le domaine du vocabulaire proprement dit pour aborder celui de la thématique". Il primo tema preso in esame è quello della gola che ha in Margutte il suo più famoso esponente. Fra le tesi che sono state proposte a spiegazione dell'episodio di Margutte, lo studioso francese concorda con quella di Salvatore Nigro che identifica nella figura del mezzo gigante "l'espressione di un naturalismo borghese godereccio e burlone". Lo Jonard trova questa tesi "plus séduisante" anche perché si riallaccerebbe al "réalisme grotesque" delle feste carnevalesche medievali che proponevano la "transgression des toutes les règles

et la liberation des toutes les contraintes.”

Riguardo poi la mancata impiccagione di Astolfo, lo Jonard accetta l'opinione del Ceserani per il quale in quest'episodio il tema della Via Crucis, sostenuto dal De Robertis, si intreccerebbe con quello della forca, caro al Pulci. Per il critico, risulta ad ogni modo difficile non vedere, nel cosiddetto calvario di Astolfo, “une adaptation parodique d'un épisode de l'histoire sainte”. Secondo lo Jonard, sarebbe errato prendere seriamente sia l'amore di Forisena per Ulivieri sia quello di Ulivieri per Meridiana, episodi in cui il “travestissement parodique est . . . sous-tendu par un anti-stilnovisme qui contribue à faire du burlesque un genre de réaction”. Lo stesso vale anche per gli amori di Rinaldo e di Antea, definiti un vero e proprio “pastiche” culturale dove “le sérieux du recit ne suppose pas le sérieux de l'auteur”. Nella stessa prospettiva dev'essere visto anche l'episodio di Florinetta, a proposito del quale il critico sostiene che il “Pulci n'est assurément pas le poète de l'amour. Il n'en est, tous au plus, que le rhétoricien.”

Sebbene reputi alquanto difficile determinare il significato del ruolo di Astorotte nel poema, lo Jonard appare nondimeno propenso a considerare la presenza del diavolo-teologo “dans un sens ironique” anziché ritenerla “un simple dèmarquage” delle teorie neoplatoniche ficiniane.

Lo studioso francese conclude affermando che il *Morgante* è solo “exceptionnellement” un poema satirico. La pia Lucrezia Tornabuoni non avrebbe certo affidato al Pulci il compito di ridicolizzare “l'idéal chevaleresque et l'esprit religieux qui le sous-tendait”. Dal momento che la satira si esercita solo “contre ce qui est actuel ou contre le vices éternels”, essa non può evidentemente riversarsi nel *Morgante* “contre l'aristocratie guerrière représentée per le paladins de Charlemagne”, ormai fuori della storia, semmai “contre une rhétorique aussi vivante que le pétrarquisme, contre l'humanisme contemporain ou contre les aspects les plus discutables de la religion”. In ultima analisi, si tratti di “humour” o di “ironie”, la comicità del poema pulciano è una realtà che non può essere messa in discussione. Essa si rivela infatti “par la pratique systématique de l'irrespect qui est la sagesse de la folie”. Dietro il *Morgante* si individua finalmente “la lieta brigata qui applaudit et affirme sa supériorité par le rire”.

Larivaille, Paul. “Morgante da ‘fiero’ a ‘gentil gigante’: carnevalizzazione della materia cavalleresca e recupero cavalleresco di tradizioni carnevalesche”. *Culture et société en Italie du Moyen-Age à la Renaissance. Hommage à André Rochon*. Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1985. 103-15.

In quella che il Larivaille precisa essere “una lettura del *Morgante* che non può prescindere dal confronto con l'*Orlando*, ma senza implicazioni cronologiche di sorta”, il critico si propone di dimostrare la graduale trasformazione del Morgante pulciano da “fiero” a “gentil gigante.”

Rilevata l’“affinità strutturale” fra il *Morgante* e l'*Orlando*, entrambi

organizzati secondo due “macrosequenze successive” il cui motore è sempre Gano, il critico individua nella “precoce” scomparsa di Morgante dal testo del canterino la “differenza più macroscopica” che caratterizza questi due poemi. Nell’*Orlando*, com’è noto, Morgante viene menzionato per l’ultima volta alla stanza 5 del cantare XVII, corrispondente in parte alla materia trattata nel cantare X del *Morgante*.

Nell’esaminare la figura e l’indole di Morgante il critico sottolinea che la sua decisione di farsi cristiano non avviene, come d’uso, in seguito ad uno scontro da lui combattuto e perso. L’iniziale conversione dell’invitto gigante è quindi considerata un importante “accorgimento” mediante il quale il Pulci, sottraendo Morgante “alla necessaria superiorità dei campioni cristiani, moltiplica le possibilità di azione del gigante, restituendogli la forza invincibile del gigante della tradizione medievale”.

Noi possiamo anche sottoscrivere a questa interpretazione; tuttavia ci pare che il Larivaille, essendo la conversione di Morgante nell’*Orlando* provocata dalla stessa visione avuta dal Morgante pulciano, avrebbe dovuto chiarire se anche nel caso della conversione del Morgante del canterino sia lecito parlare di un cosciente “accorgimento” del poeta.

La meraviglia che Morgante causa su tutti ogni qual volta egli si presenta sulla scena del poema è, secondo il critico, dovuta alla sua invincibilità; per questo motivo le sue iperboliche prodezze sono causa più di stupore che di riso. Se è vero che la morte di Morgante, causata dal morso di un granchiolino, non può non apparire ridicola, è altrettanto vero che essa “è tutt’altro che comica e non intacca il suo ormai confermato titanismo”. Per il Larivaille infatti “Comico . . . può essere lo spettacolo offerto dalla fantasia e dall’estro narrativo del Pulci, non la vicenda e la fine di Morgante in sé, non la filosofia della vita che la sorregge e ne deriva: perciò anche il riso spontaneo che la scena può provocare nel pubblico è destinato a sfumare presto nell’amarezza”.

Negli ultimi cantari della seconda macrosequenza del capolavoro pulciano — ed è questa la parte centrale del saggio — il Larivaille vede delinearsi nel carattere di Morgante “una dimensione prettamente cavalleresca” — del tutto assente nel gigante dell’*Orlando* — grazie alla quale il Pulci riesce ad “elevare il suo Morgante alla condizione di paladino”. Il gigante del Pulci, precedentemente ritratto quale cortigiano di Carlomagno a Parigi, e quindi come “cavalier servente” e protettore di Meridiana, acquista in questa parte del poema “lo statuto di un vero paladino”. Un’attenta lettura dell’episodio dell’incontro di Morgante e di Margutte con Florinetta e del loro breve viaggio insieme permette al critico di rilevare nel comportamento di Morgante nei riguardi dell’infelice giovane “una serie ridondante di conferme della definitiva trasformazione di Morgante in perfetto cavaliere”.

Il Larivaille non manca infine di osservare che nel Morgante pulciano convivono, insieme ai sentimenti di delicatezza e cortesia dimostrati dal gigante in quest’ultima parte del poema, “eccessi di un barbaro furore”. I difetti e gli

eccessi di Morgante non sono però “caratteristiche peculiari dei giganti”, ma si riscontrano in notevole misura anche nei paladini e particolarmente in Orlando e Rinaldo; “nell’atmosfera di allegra violenza verbale e gestuale in cui bagna l’intero poema” — precisa infatti il critico — “la differenza fra Morgante e un Orlando o un Rinaldo non è differenza di natura, ma solo di gradi: una differenza che per lo più scaturisce . . . dalla differenza di statura e di forza fra Morgante e i paladini”.

Pastore-Stocchi, Manlio. “Ritratto di Luigi Pulci. Ricordo nel V Centenario della sua morte a Padova”. *Atti e Memorie dell’Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere e Arti*. XCVII (1984-85) III: 23-42.

Di questo articolo non è stato possibile ottenere copia.

Tavernati, Andrea. “Appunti sulla diffusione quattrocentesca de *Il Driadeo* di Luca Pulci”. *La Bibliografia* 87, 3 (1985): 267-79.

Di questo articolo non è stato possibile ottenere copia.

1986

Boni, Marco. “A proposito di un personaggio del *Morgante* (‘Dodone, il Figliuol del Danese’)”. *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze dell’Istituto di Bologna. Rendiconti*. Vol. LXXIII (1984-85). Bologna: Tipografia Compositori, 1986. 97-113.

Riconosciuto a Dodone un ruolo di “notevole rilievo” fra i cavalieri cristiani del *Morgante* e data per scontata la sua derivazione dall’*Orlando*, il Boni si propone di rintracciare l’opera nella quale Dodone, non certo “invenzione” dell’anonimo canterino, appare per la prima volta come fratello di Baldovino e secondo figlio di Ugghieri il Danese. In tal modo il critico spera di chiarire un “piccolo problema” sino ad oggi trascurato da tutti coloro che hanno studiato le fonti dell’*Orlando* e del *Morgante*.

Dalle esaustive ricerche condotte dal Boni sui più antichi testi francesi e sui loro rimaneggiamenti successivi, sia in versi che in prosa, risulta che al Danese viene generalmente attribuito soltanto un figlio (Baudouinet, Baudouin o Bauduyns). Nei testi in cui, oltre a Baudouin o Balduinet, gli viene riconosciuto un secondo figlio, questi si chiama Meurvin, Murmunin o Buevon, e non Dodone.

Come non si fa menzione di Dodone nei cantari franco-italiani, dove Ugghieri o non ha figli o ne ha soltanto uno (Baldovino), così Dodone è assente in tutte le varie rielaborazioni della “materia di Spagna”. Il nome di Dodone, invece, appare per la prima volta nel codice di Bergamo e nella seconda parte del poema stampato col titolo di *Ugieri il Danese*. Il Boni non crede però che queste siano le fonti più antiche in quanto esse rivelano “l’intervento di tardi rimaneggiatori”.

Molto più importante è invece il manoscritto, catalogato col titolo di

“Additional 10808”, conservato presso il British Museum di Londra. La prima parte di questo manoscritto contiene l'*Aspromonte*, opera in prosa di anonimo — che il critico definisce “sicuramente il più antico degli *Aspromonti* italiani” e che fa risalire agli ultimi anni del Trecento o ai primissimi del secolo successivo — in cui Dodone viene menzionato quale secondo figlio del Danese, accanto al fratello Baldovino. Ancora più ricca di informazioni è la seconda parte dello stesso manoscritto che incorpora per mano di un copista d'epoca posteriore la trascrizione di un romanzo cavalleresco anch'esso di anonimo. È qui appunto che Dodone, presentato quale uno dei protagonisti della storia, combatte con un grosso bastone (particolare da cui, nota il Boni, gli deriverà nell'*Orlando* e nel *Morgante* il soprannome di “Dodone della mazza”) insieme a Carlo, Orlando, Rinaldo, Uggieri e Ulivieri.

Al termine della sua erudita e interessante ricerca, il Boni formula l'ipotesi che tanto l'autore dell'*Aspromonte* quanto quello del romanzo contenuto nella seconda parte del manoscritto londinese, si siano ispirati entrambi ad un racconto anteriore “riguardante varie avventure di Dodone”, scritto verso la fine del XIV secolo. Il Boni è dell'opinione che questo poema o romanzo fu indubbiamente composto da un italiano che per dare “alla storia da lui narrata una certa originalità, ebbe l'idea di attribuire a Uggieri il Danese un secondo figlio, seguendo la consuetudine, ormai tradizionale nella narrativa cavalleresca più tarda, di ‘inventare’ figli o altri parenti degli eroi più famosi, per farne i protagonisti di nuovi racconti”. Come fonte per il personaggio di Dodone, l'anonimo autore dell'*Orlando* si sarebbe quindi servito di quest'opera che il critico auspica possa essere un giorno rinvenuta “nei fondi inesplorati o poco noti di qualche biblioteca”.

Gareffi, Andrea. *L'ombra dell'eroe. Il Morgante*. Urbino: QuattroVenti, 1986.

Nelle prime pagine di questo breve studio monografico, il Gareffi, sulle orme del De Robertis, sostiene che bisogna “leggere il *Morgante* con l'occhio attento alla retorica delle immagini che lo sostanziano”.

Considerando “solo provocatoria e non sostenibile per ragioni meramente stilistiche” l'ipotesi del possibile capovolgimento del rapporto *Orlando/Morgante* proposta dall'Orvieto, il critico lascia ai filologi il compito di risolvere la spinosa questione delle fonti del poema pulciano per occuparsi invece “della parodia che nel *Morgante* prende corpo”.

Nella prima metà del saggio (pp. 7-27), l'autore, propostosi di dimostrare che “le ottave di inizio di ciascuno dei cantari del *Morgante* testimoniano di come lo stravolgimento parodico del mondo cavalleresco vada di conserva con lo stravolgimento altrettanto parodico della tradizione religiosa”, esamina le invocazioni di apertura dei cantari del poema, sottolineando che, dal cantare XIII in poi, predomina in esse la riscrittura parodica di passi evangelici e di salmi.

Nella seconda e più interessante parte del saggio (pp. 27-54), il Gareffi

giustamente rileva che il poema del Pulci segna la caduta del mito dell'eroe rappresentato dalla tradizione quale difensore della fede e custode di ogni virtù morale e spirituale. Analizzando nei cantari XVIII e XIX la figura e il ruolo di Margutte, lo studioso definisce il mezzo gigante del Pulci "la contraddizione vivente dell'ideale eroico come ideale dell'io" e osserva, concludendo, che la "novità di Pulci sta nel non criminalizzare Margutte, nel non moralizzare la sua figura, nel non demonizzare il suo comportamento, e, anzi, nel rendercelo simpatico, congeniale, fino al punto di far essere sé e il lettore complici delle malefatte del suo personaggio".

Jordan, Constance. "The Narrative Form of Pulci's *Morgante*". *Studies in Philology* 83, 3 (Summer 1986): 303-29.

Questo articolo è in gran parte incorporato nel primo capitolo del libro della Jordan, *Pulci's 'Morgante': Poetry and History in Fifteenth-Century Florence*.

Jordan, Constance. *Pulci's Morgante: Poetry and History in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. Folger Books. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library. London: Associated University Presses, 1986.

Nella prefazione l'autrice afferma di voler considerare il capolavoro pulciano "as a narrative and to focus on its complex structure, its use of perspective as both a formal principle and a figure of thought, and its representation of the poet as historian" (11).

A questa dichiarazione programmatica si affianca la tesi enunciata *a priori*, ma poi non convincentemente provata, per cui il *Morgante* costituirebbe "the most fundamental exercise of the historicist imagination" (9). Secondo la Jordan, l'opera del poeta fiorentino "by perspectivizing the history of Carlo . . . establishes the fact of its own historical contingency. It reveals that what is known of the past, as history, is discovered not as some glimpse of a bygone time but rather as the product of a continuous process of re-vision" (48).

Nel corso dei capitoli seguenti questa intenzionalità iniziale trova ulteriori articolazioni, espresse in frasi come quella che leggiamo a pagina 53: "In each adventure the apparently external enemy embodies or exemplifies a moral weakness that actually afflicts the paladin confronting it. The adventures are therefore allegories of chivalric education and serve as tests to strengthen moral virtue; their successful completion guarantees moral regeneration". All'esemplarità morale di queste avventure si associa il loro valore sociale dal momento che la fusione nel *Morgante* "of the narrative forms of history and romance, or chronicle and story, is matched by a corresponding mingling of conceptions of the social order" (67). Le prime avventure incarnano virtù complementari per i cavalieri, quali fede o umiltà per le creature di Dio; quindi, ordine sociale e storia cristiana; ragione e temperanza. Ne consegue che "the paladins participate in history because (or insofar as) they have the perfected

moral characters that appear in allegorized myth" (112). Per la Jordan il Pulci è perciò "a brilliant allegorist".

Dalla convinzione che nella prima parte del *Morgante* il Pulci si limiti a illustrare "the chivalric virtue of the Emperor's paladins" (125), l'autrice passa disinvoltamente a postulare che "the entire story of Orlando's martyrdom is also understood at a typological level as a repetition of the Passion, an interpretation additionally supported by the references to Gano as Judas that rapidly multiply in cantos 25 and on" (127). E Orlando trionfa perché soffre da martire cristiano; il paladino che si avvia alla volta di Roncisvalle non è soltanto l'immagine della devozione cristiana, ma rappresenta anche la devozione umanistica per la conoscenza pura.

Con l'arrivo di Malagigi sulla scena, però, si attua una "inversion of rhetorical and moral values" (135) e il poeta "can then assume the character of a magician and represent his work as a conjuration of an artificial or magical reality that is wholly indistinguishable from reality itself. And in fact it is in the activities of Malagigi that Pulci at first represents the work of an infallible poet" (131-32). Questo mutamento di percezione del Pulci riguardo il compito del poeta porta la Jordan a ri-interpretare il ruolo di Morgante e di Margutte nei canti XVIII e XIX del poema, dove il gigante rappresenta le funzioni artistiche della *invention*, mentre il comportamento furbesco di Margutte non può non significare l'*abilità retorica*: "Margutte is in short a kind of parasite artist, his activities limited to the witty manipulation of appearances" (135).

Leggendo il saggio della Jordan si ha sempre più l'impressione che il testo del *Morgante* venga manipolato al fine di poter giustificare idee e tesi preconcepite. Il problema inerente a questo tipo di approccio è aggravato dalla mancata consultazione di studi fondamentali che avrebbero potuto prevenire errori d'interpretazione sia di natura culturale che critica. L'autrice avrebbe certo potuto rinforzare le sue tesi su Orlando citando June McCash, Julian White e Janet Boatner.¹ Altri gravi errori sarebbero stati evitati se le opere citate fossero state più attentamente lette.

Anche tralasciando di notare grossolani errori d'ortografia come Merediana ripetuto in tutto il libro, *Pulci's Morgante* è pieno di errori di traduzione che danno talvolta adito a incorrette interpretazioni del testo italiano e mettono seriamente in dubbio la competenza linguistica della studiosa. Ci limitiamo a riportarne alcuni: l'espressione *in bando* è resa con "in chains" (28); la frase della

¹ June Hall Martin McCash, "'Scientia' and 'Sapientia' in the *Chanson de Roland*", *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s. 11 (1982), 131-47, dove viene messa a fuoco una 'certa logica del martirio' nel paladino; Julian Eugene White, "*La Chanson de Roland*: Secular or Religious Inspiration?" *Romania* 84 (1963): 398-408, in cui si sostiene che la morte di Roland rivela il valore della penitenza e che la cristianità unifica il poema; Janet W. Boatner, "The Misunderstood Ordeal. A Re-examination of the *Chanson de Roland*", *Studies in Philology* 66 (1969): 571-83, che definisce la morte di Roland una penitenza simbolica.

lettera del Pulci al Magnifico Vero è che il mio Bernardo è stato di latte, perché io gli dixi e scripsi della Marca 6 volte, è tradotta "It's true my Bernardo is made of milk, for I told him and wrote him on March 6th" (30); i *canestretti* delle ninfe (XXV, 117, 4) diventano strumenti musicali, "little pipes" (145); decisamente originale (si fa per dire) è la versione della frase della lettera di Matteo Franco *Gigi è animella delle vostre palle*, "Gigi is a little animal of your mattress" (nota 56, 186); *la quale è apparecchiata*, usata con riferimento alla grazia divina, diviene "which is apparent" (nota 13, 194); la parola *cappone* (XVIII, 115, 2) — scritta tuttavia *caponne* — diviene "fish" (110), così come la frase *i negromanti rade volte* è tradotta, "frequently magicians" (133).

Uno dei più madornali errori di traduzione e di comprensione del *Morgante* ha luogo a pagina 111 dove la Jordan descrive il *cappello a spicchi alla turchesca* di Margutte (XVIII, 142, 2) come "a yellow hat resembling a cock's comb crowned with sharp spurs". Veramente nella ottava in questione di giallo ci sono soltanto gli stivaletti di Margutte, forniti di *spron come hanno i galli* (148, 7-8). Ma non è tutto. Sempre alla stessa pagina leggiamo che "Morgante steals Margutte's hat while he sleeps and places it on the head of a monkey who lurks nearby. When Margutte wakes and sees the strange creature, he dies laughing, killed by the perception of his own simian character". Questa errata versione dei fatti, che Etiemble definirebbe "une trahison créatrice", è aggravata dall'immaginazione della Jordan per la quale "the action suggests the nature of the moral reform Morgante (and by extension Orlando) experiences by Margutte's death".

Una certa mancanza di precisione nell'esposizione dei fatti induce a chiederci se l'autrice abbia veramente letto tutto il poema o si sia servita di un qualche riassunto preparato da altri. Per esempio, a pagina 50 il regno di Forisena, minacciato da un enorme serpente, non viene salvato soltanto da Rinaldo, ma anche da Ulivieri che uccide la terribile fiera; la corte di Carlomagno non è "restored to order by the paladins" ma dallo stesso Rinaldo che la minacciava; Chiariella, la cui terra è invasa dal Soldano, non è affatto "rescued by the paladins" bensì da Orlando che impedisce al gigante Corante di farla sua prigioniera; il "monster" che minaccia Filisetta è in vero il gigante predone Fuligatto; Gano viene catturato da Lionfante, ammirante di Emireno, e non "by a witch". Né tantomeno è accurato scrivere che Orlando e Morgante "deliver a palatial wasteland from a mysterious malady" (67) quando non di malattia si tratta ma dell'incanto dal quale Orlando e Morgante liberano il castello del cantare II; infine, nell'episodio di Astolfo e i ladroni (XXI, 83-92) non è il duca che "hangs the thieves" (117), ma i romiti persuasi dalle minacce di Astolfo.

L'analisi narrativa annunciata nella prefazione soffre di uguale mancanza di precisione. Le sequenze elementari vengono ingarbugliate o sono addirittura erronee. Le convergenze dei ricorsi stilistici e contenutistici sono trascurate; si cercano invano gli stilemi portanti, le concatenazioni stilistiche, le cerniere narramiche addotte per sostenere la tesi unitaria. Manca, insomma,

l'identificazione precisa di una costellazione lessicale o semantica. Si nota purtroppo una confusione ad arbitrio di livelli eterogenei di linguaggio e una scarsa attenzione al materiale narrativo autonomo. La Jordan stessa ammette i limiti evidenti del suo tentativo di identificare uno schema coerente ed unitario per la prima parte del *Morgante* quando afferma che "No reader of Part 1 can fail to notice how much that is important to its action I have left out" (56). Notiamo infatti che la centralità di Carlomagno nell'epica viene propugnata in base alla presenza dell'imperatore in circa 180 ottave su un totale di oltre 3750. Anche la tesi principale di un Pulci che "was in possession of all the elements with which to articulate the central concerns of historiography" (11) si fonda sulla base precaria che vorrebbe legare gli eventi principali alla vita dell'imperatore (48). Secondo la Jordan il poeta fiorentino "perceived himself as Carlo's best historian" (126); questa affermazione, però, non regge perché, come lei stessa scrive a pagina 46 discutendo il problema delle fonti del *Morgante*, il Pulci "made no major changes or interpolations".

La Jordan mostra di applicare le ultimissime teorie sulla testualità e intertestualità aggiungendo la sua interpretazione quale supplemento al testo originale. E le interpretazioni abbondano anche se il testo si oppone talvolta alla scoperta di nuovi significati dato che esso non può significare qualcosa che non è, come l'autrice stessa riconosce (178). Si può quindi affermare (modificando un intervento del Barbi sul X dell'*Inferno*) che la Jordan riesce a suscitare fantasmi, a scoprire risonanze più larghe di quelle che pensa il poeta, specie quando l'autrice l'aiuta con ingegnosi e fantasiosi costrutti teorici, preesistenti allo svolgimento dell'analisi. Sembra quasi incredibile che un libro che vorrebbe mettere a fuoco "the struggle to formulate historiographic norms" (9) dia ben poco o nessun peso alle lunghe polemiche sulle relazioni fra poesia e storia durante il Rinascimento.

Delle recensioni al libro della Jordan apparse negli Stati Uniti riteniamo opportuno ricordare quella, in generale favorevole, di Albert R. Ascoli — *Renaissance Quarterly* 41, 1 (1988): 148-51 — e quelle, decisamente negative, di Raymond A. Prier — *Annali di Italianistica* 8 (1990): 449-53 — e Walter Stephens — *Comparative Literature* 42, 3 (1990): 264-68. Al termine della sua estesa e oltremodo particolareggiata recensione, lo Stephens, dopo aver dichiarato che il *Morgante* della Jordan "could engender a Borgesian Babelic library of pseudo Pulci scholarship if trusting students, with little or not Italian, rely upon it heavily in comparative studies", esprime la speranza che questo libro non sia "extensively reviewed in Italy".

Pulci, Luigi. *Opere minori*. A c. di P. Orvieto. Milano: Mursia, 1986.

Orvieto, Paolo. "In margine all'edizione e commento delle opere minori di Luigi Pulci". *Interpres* VI (1986): 91-123.

Ribadito il giudizio precedentemente espresso sulla *Giostra* nell'introduzione alla sua edizione delle opere minori del Pulci (pp. 58-59), l'Orvieto, al fine di

evidenziare le “macroscopiche divergenze” fra i due testi, sottopone le stanze in cui è descritta l'apparizione di Lorenzo de' Medici e del suo seguito ad un “confronto diretto” con le corrispondenti pagine del *Ricordo*.

Riaffermando in sostanza quanto già scritto sulla datazione delle due frottole del Pulci (Opere minori, pp. 17-20), il critico precisa che nel 1471-72 *Le galee per Quaracchi* era conosciuta non solo a Firenze ma anche a Napoli. Egli sostiene inoltre che l'ipotesi cronologica del Volpi concernente la seconda frottola sia errata in quanto basata su una prova rivelatasi “inconsistente”. I due componimenti poetici sarebbero quindi stati scritti prima del 1478-80; più precisamente, “nei primi mesi del 1466” *I' vo' dire una frottola* e probabilmente nella seconda metà del 1465 *Le galee per Quaracchi* (per la quale il critico ammette anche la possibilità di una datazione di qualche anno posteriore).

A proposito poi del passo della lettera che il Pulci scrisse al Magnifico in data 27 aprile 1465 — passo che permette al Volpi di collocare in quello stesso anno la compilazione del *Vocabulista* — l'Orvieto, pur non escludendo che il brano in questione possa “effettivamente” riferirsi alle ricerche linguistiche del Pulci, riconosce che fra il *Vocabulista* e la canzone *Da poi che 'l lauro esiste* “uno stretto rapporto di dipendenza”. Pur ammettendo la possibilità di aggiunte posteriori, il critico ritiene che nel periodo che va dal 25 aprile 1465 al 21 marzo 1466 il Pulci “abbia raggruppato nel suo *Vocabulista* lemmi che forse già da tempo aveva disordinatamente annotato”.

Nell'ultima parte del suo articolo l'Orvieto ripropone all'attenzione degli studiosi, corredati di note e del relativo apparato critico, i due sonetti “in lingua sanese” del Pulci.

1987

Boninger, Lorenz. “Notes on the Last Years of Luigi Pulci (1477-1484)”. *Rinascimento: Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento* XXVII (1987): 259-71.

In queste note, concepite come semplici “additions” allo studio biografico del Volpi, il Boninger cerca di ricostruire, in base ad un attento esame della corrispondenza di Benedetto Dei, l'ultimo, più triste periodo della vita dell'autore del *Morgante*. Fra le lettere discusse quella che il Dei inviò, nel marzo del 1481, al Pulci — ch'egli riteneva fosse ancora a Firenze, mentre il poeta era probabilmente già in viaggio per Milano — onde sollecitarlo ad accettare l'incarico di capitano di Val di Lugana (sino ad allora occupato dal comune amico Piero Vespucci che pareva disposto a rinunciarvi). Secondo il Boninger, i moderni biografi del Pulci “have been too quick to deny this possibility”. La corrispondenza del Dei farebbe infatti pensare che il Pulci si fosse effettivamente recato nel luganese con la speranza di ottenere un lavoro, anche se non essenzialmente quello di capitano di giustizia. Non solo, ma da una lettera che il poeta inviò al Dei nell'estate dell'81 risulterebbe possibile che lo scrivente fosse alle dipendenze del Vespucci sin dal febbraio di quello stesso anno. Resta

comunque il fatto che, in una sua successiva epistola al Dei, scritta a Firenze il 28 novembre 1481, il Pulci lamenta l'inutilità del suo viaggio a Milano e la mancata nomina a capitano di giustizia di Val di Lugana.

Tornato a Firenze nell'autunno dell'81, il Pulci rimase in questa città almeno sino alla primavera del 1483. Mentre mancano notizie precise sui suoi spostamenti nei mesi immediatamente successivi, pare ch'egli tentò ancora una volta, ma inutilmente, di trovarsi un impiego a Milano. È certo che nell'agosto del 1484 Pulci era a Bagnolo, vicino a Ferrara, con Roberto di Sanseverino. Da Ferrara, dove era arrivato probabilmente in compagnia del Dei, il poeta partì poi per Venezia al seguito del Sanseverino, mentre l'amico Dei proseguì per Milano. Luigi Pulci certamente morì poco dopo l'8 settembre di quell'anno, giorno dell'entrata di Roberto di Sanseverino a Venezia. A questo proposito, mentre il Volpi pone la morte del poeta fra l'ottobre e il novembre del 1484, per il Boninger "September and early October 1484 is the only possible period".

Orvieto, Paolo. "Nota (e ammenda) a Luigi Pulci, 'Da poi che 'l lauro', vv. 128-32". *Interpres* VII (1987): 219-20.

Riconoscendo errata l'ipotesi proposta a spiegazione dei vv. 128-32 della canzone *Da poi che 'l lauro*, inclusa nella sua edizione delle opere minori del Pulci (Milano: Mursia, 1986, p. 49), l'Orvieto dichiara che l'*ombra* in questione è "senza dubbio Piccarda Donati".

1988

Ankli, Ruedi. "Tra la 'geste' e il triangolo amoroso (Aspetti di plurivocità nel cantare VII del *Morgante*". *Versants* 13 (1988): 67-85.

In questo articolo, riprodotto con pochissime varianti alle pagine 214-31 del suo studio sull'iperbole nel *Morgante* (Firenze: Olschki, 1993), il giovane studioso svizzero analizza "alcuni aspetti della tecnica stilistica e narrativa del cantare VII", in cui il Pulci assegna al suo gigante, come farà poi ai cantari X e XVIII-XX, un ruolo almeno di comprimario se non proprio di protagonista.

Lepschy, Anna Laura. "In principio era il verbo'. I tempi nel primo cantare del 'Morgante'". *Renaissance and Other Studies. Essays Presented to Peter M. Brown.* A c. di E. A. Millar. Department of Italian, University of Glasgow, 1988. 74-93.

Le 760 forme verbali finite contenute nelle 86 ottave del primo cantare del *Morgante* consentono di dividere il testo in due parti: "diegetica" (esposizione o racconto) e "mimetica" (discorso diretto). Mentre la sequenza dei verbi nei versi tratti dalla parte mimetica del cantare rivela dei contrasti, talora problematici, fra imperfetto e passato remoto, la sequenza verbale negli esempi della parte diegetica mette in luce non solo contrasti fra imperfetto e presente (e viceversa), ma anche "frequenti spostamenti" fra passato remoto e presente. Questi contrasti

servono o a sottolineare un particolare stato d'animo, oppure a dar maggior rilievo ad un dato evento o personaggio. È inoltre alquanto probabile che, in alcuni casi, la scelta d'un determinato tempo sia stata imposta da esigenze di rima.

Il breve confronto che la Lepschy fa a conclusione del suo studio fra la struttura del periodo nel primo canto del *Furioso* e nel primo cantare del *Morgante* conferma, cosa che certo non sorprende, la maggiore complessità del tessuto narrativo ariostesco.

1989

Ankli, Ruedi. "Eine Stelle aus Luigi Pulcis *Morgante* (XXII, 215 -XXIII, 48) im Umfeld des 'poema cavalleresco toscano'". *Die Ritterepik der Renaissance. Akten des Deutsch-Italienischen Kolloquiums*, Berlin 30. 3 - 2. 4, 1987. Herausgegeben von K. W. Hempfer. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989. 123-43.²

Posto che nell'arco di una generazione di ricercatori, gli studi intertestuali sul *Morgante* si sono esauriti con la ricerca delle fonti, l'infelice dogma del cosiddetto *Orlando* permane come fonte maggiore del poema pulciano. Se il fondamentale studio del Dionisotti (del 1959) ha segnato un nuovo indirizzo per lo studio dei cantari, a Paolo Orvieto spetta il merito di aver proposto col suo *Pulci medievale* l'ipotesi di una "équipe" fiorentina elaboratrice, nel giro di pochi anni, di una certa mole di poemi cavallereschi. Mancandoci però, a più di trent'anni dalla pubblicazione del saggio del Dionisotti, la prova di un testo in ottava rima che tratti la materia carolingia prima del 1450, l'Ankli ritiene sia cosa legittima domandarsi quali opere il Pulci avesse a portata di mano accingendosi a comporre il suo poema. Se non l'*Orlando*, quali altri testi poteva egli conoscere: *La Spagna*, *La Rotta*, *Uggieri il Danese*, *Le storie di Rinaldo*, *L'Entrée d'Espagne*, qualche manoscritto o libro francese? Inoltre, quali sono i testi che nascono in concorrenza, o forse grazie al *Morgante*?

Basandosi sull'ipotesi di una *koinè* di temi che costituiscono il genere del poema cavalleresco toscano, lo studioso svizzero propone uno studio delle componenti del *Morgante* che permettano un confronto con altri testi. Sono così attentamente studiate 93 ottave (dalla 215 del cantare XXII alla 48 del cantare XXIII) dove si racconta che Rinaldo, convertiti gli abitanti di Saliscaglia, lascia la città al fine di liberare ai pellegrini la via del Santo Sepolcro. Scontratosi con Fuligatto, Rinaldo lo battezza e questi diviene suo compagno di avventure — fra le quali l'uccisione del centauro Spinardo e poi quella del gigante Pilagi d'Ulivante — fino al loro arrivo a un romitorio, dove i due sono sfamati da un

² In queste pagine riportano, con alcune minori modifiche e qualche abbreviazione, la presentazione che l'autore dell'articolo ha redatto in italiano e che ci ha cortesemente inviato onde essere inclusa in questa rassegna.

romita e da un angelo.

Per prima cosa l'Ankli osserva la presenza d'una coincidenza abbastanza sorprendente del *Morgante* non solo con la *Spagna*, ma anche con delle scene consimili nel *Danese* e negli altri testi presi in esame. Gli elementi salienti del paragone fra il poema del Pulci e la *Spagna* si trovano già nella struttura narrativa di questo cantare in cui Orlando, convertito il popolo del Soldano, torna in Spagna accompagnato da Pilagi, figlio di Machidante, e da Sansonetto. Nel *Morgante*, Rinaldo si reca da solo al Santo Sepolcro, dopo aver fatto battezzare il popolo di Diliante. Gli fa poi da compagno Fuligatto. Dopo varie prove con giganti, mostri, leoni e serpenti — presenti in entrambi i testi — essi giungono a un romitorio. Mentre nella *Spagna* Orlando fa ritorno a Pamplona, nel *Morgante* Rinaldo e Fuligatto si perdono in Oriente al termine di una serie di avventure che non hanno seguito poiché solo nel cantare XXV Rinaldo e Ricciardetto saranno portati da Astorotte a Roncisvalle.

Il confronto mette in rilievo ulteriori dettagli. Nella *Spagna*, Pilagi, che non riesce ad attraversare un fiume profondo perché ancora gli manca la fede, viene salvato da Orlando. In seguito i due incontrano un gigante "tutto coperto di coame" con una "mazza pesante di più di cento libbre" (XX, 40), il quale cadendo uccide Pilagi. Nel *Morgante*, Fuligatto propone a Rinaldo una scommessa per sapere chi segue la vera fede. Vince Rinaldo che battezza Fuligatto a una fonte. Riguardo al commento del Pulci (XXIII, 28, 2-8), il critico si domanda a quale testo il poeta si riferisca in quest'ottava: alla scena del fiume nella *Spagna* (XX, 34-35) oppure a quella che si legge nel *Danese* (33v, XI, 44) dove Rinaldo uccide un messo di Gano a una fontana o all'altra scena in cui il paladino battezza qualcuno (38r, XIII, 3)? In questi poemi cavallereschi esiste senz'altro un motivo comune, ma niente esclude che tutti i testi a nostra disposizione si riferiscano al *Morgante* o ad un'altra fonte non pervenutaci.

Continuando la sua analisi, l'Ankli ricorda che nel *Morgante* Rinaldo e Fuligatto incontrano il gigante Pilagi d'Ulivante, della cui schiatta si fa menzione anche nelle *Storie di Rinaldo*. Tuttavia, mentre nella *Spagna* questo nome è attribuito all'amico di Orlando, nel poema pulciano Pilagi è un gigante nemico di Rinaldo. Nella *Spagna* (XX, 40, 1-4) la descrizione del gigante che uccide Pilagi corrisponde invece a quella che il Pulci dà di Fuligatto (XXII, 243, 2-8). Le somiglianze fra i due testi non concernono soltanto il piano narrativo (il cuoio, la mazza, l'indicazione del peso), ma anche quello descrittivo. Quanto al nome di Pilagi, neanche la *Spagna* permette un paragone con l'*Entrée*, poiché il Pelias di questo cantare è nipote di Machidante, e non suo figlio, e gli amici che accompagnano Orlando si chiamano Sanson, Hugues e Aquilant. Mentre il Catalano pensa ad un testo intermedio tra la *Spagna* e l'*Entrée*, conosciuto anche dal Pulci, la mancanza di siffatto testo rende soltanto possibile comparare gli elementi dei due testi — *Morgante* e *Spagna* — forse familiari l'uno all'altro.

La scena degli affamati Rinaldo e Fuligatto al romitorio ci fornisce, secondo il critico, uno splendido esempio della tecnica pulciana di ripresa e di fusione di

testi o motivi altrui nella sua "storia". Nella *Spagna* anche Orlando è in cerca di cibo quando incontra il romito Sansone. Ma se nella *Spagna* (come nell'*Entrée*) egli dà loro da mangiare pane e mele (anche se in varianti molto divergenti, almeno per quanto riguarda le mele), l'eremita del *Morgante* non offre altro che pesci. Trattando di questi cibi, assunti, come sappiamo, a un valore sacrale, il Pulci compierebbe a questo punto un doppio gioco. Se è vero infatti che il pane e il pesce possono essere visti come simboli del corpo di Cristo, è anche possibile (si veda l'ottava 47 con i suoi bisticci), applicando la chiave suggerita da Jean Toscan ne *Le carnaval du language*, interpretare i cibi in questione quali simboli dell'organo sessuale, femminile il primo, maschile il secondo.

Nell'articolo dell'Ankli sono rilevati anche altri punti di contatto: 1) mentre della scena della giostra con Bianca e Brunetta non si ha riscontro alcuno nella *Spagna*, detta scena è già nel *Perceval* di Chrétien de Troyes (come aveva osservato il Rajna a proposito di un passaggio analogo nei manoscritti di *Uggieri il Danese*); 2) la statua di bronzo, che ricorda Orlando nel *Morgante* (XXII, 253), fa pensare ad un episodio della *Spagna* (XIV, 40) in cui si racconta che Orlando, lasciata Nobile, giunge ad una fonte circondata da quattro statue di marmo. Questa fonte, dovuta a Merlino, è attribuita nell'*Entrée* all'architetto arabo Clariel; 3) sembra invece legato alla *Spagna* un "dificio" magico che nella *Ancroia* (XVII, 7 ss.) si dice creato da Merlino per uno dei paladini di Carlo o di Artù; e 4) più vicino al *Morgante* appare il testo del *Danese* (56v, SVII, 63), dove Rinaldo combatte contro un cavaliere automatico di bronzo.

Dal confronto risulta che vari elementi topici e narrativi si ripetono all'interno del poema cavalleresco in ottava rima. Se la statua di bronzo che ricorda Orlando può essere un mero ricordo o una curiosità, il motivo della fontana — nella quale il neo-battezzato Fuligatto per poco non affoga — permette al Pulci di farsi beffe di un altro autore o di farne la parodia. Se non è possibile conoscere le vere fonti del *Morgante*, si può nondimeno cercare di entrare nella fitta rete di *topoi*, immagini e nuclei narrativi del poema cavalleresco toscano. L'analisi delle 95 ottave presentata in questo articolo può fornire un'idea delle possibilità di collegare il poema pulciano ad altri testi, anche se questi non possono essere considerati come fonti vere e proprie. Ad ogni modo, questi testi, siano essi paralleli o addirittura posteriori al *Morgante*, rivelano quali erano i temi più in voga all'epoca del Pulci.

Secondo l'Ankli, il suo studio rende sempre più legittima l'ipotesi dell'"équipe" proposta dall'Orvieto. Il Pulci, egli ricorda, in una sua lettera del 1470 comunica di aver l'intenzione di scrivere anche il *Danese* e il *Rinaldo*. Il *Morgante* dovrebbe quindi essere considerato come uno zibaldone di poemi e temi cavallereschi. Le due edizioni del poema in 23 e 28 cantari e l'esistenza di ben quattro testi pubblicati separatamente dal poema maggiore (*Morgante e Margutte*, *Rotta di Babilonia*, *Regina Antea*, *Rotta di Roncisvalle*) fanno pensare che il *Morgante* non sia stato scritto come un'opera unica, ma come un insieme di poemetti — e di scene — che forse originariamente erano autonomi.

Lo studio degli elementi topici e narrativi — conclude l'Ankli — dovrebbe permettere di avvicinarsi sempre più alla vera storia del poema cavalleresco toscano in ottava rima e di capire meglio l'importanza del *Morgante* al centro dei vari testi come la *Spagna*, l'*Orlando*, il *Danese*, le *Storie di Rinaldo* e l'*Ancoia*.

Bessi, Rossella. “Il *Morgante* e il *Liombruno*”. *Interpres* IX (1989): 267-74.

Nel noto episodio di Rinaldo e Ricciardetto, che partecipano invisibili alla mensa della regina Blanda a Saragozza (*Morgante*, XXV) e nella parte conclusiva del *Liombruno*, la Bessi identifica delle notevoli similarità. “L'indubbia affinità del nucleo tematico” non permette, tuttavia, di riconoscere nel *Liombruno* “una fonte morgantiana” essendo la datazione di quest'opera ancora in discussione.

Davie, Mark. “Luigi Pulci's *Stanze per la Giostra*: Verse and Prose Accounts of a Florentine Joust of 1469”. *Italian Studies* 44 (1989): 41-58.

Persuaso che la *Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici* “has been very little studied”, il critico sostiene che le 160 ottave del Pulci si impongono all'attenzione degli studiosi per tre motivi: perché la *Giostra* “provides the immediate and self-declared precedent for Poliziano's *Stanze*,” perché fra il poemetto del Pulci e la versione in prosa esistono dei rapporti che fanno di quest'ultima il “point of departure” della *Giostra*; perché il raffronto fra il testo poetico e la sua fonte narrativa “provides a fresh insight” intorno alla tecnica poetica del Pulci, così come il confronto fra il *Morgante* e l'*Orlando* serve ad illustrare le superiori qualità artistiche del poeta fiorentino.

Dall'esame dei due testi risulta che la parte descrittiva della *Giostra* rivela differenze sostanziali rispetto alla pura cronaca dei fatti esposti nel *Ricordo*. Nel suo poemetto il Pulci non dimostra soltanto piena libertà nei riguardi della fonte, ma anche una palese predilezione per l'occulto, una buona conoscenza di Dante, nonché l'intenzione di modellare il ritratto di Lorenzo de' Medici su quelli di Orlando e di Rinaldo.

Per quanto concerne poi le stanze del combattimento (che, assente nel *Ricordo*, termina con l'accidentale caduta da cavallo di Lorenzo, subito dopo proclamato vincitore della giostra), osservato che fra queste e il *Morgante* esistono dei paralleli, il Davie presenta tutta una serie di esempi che contengono frasi, immagini, espressioni iperboliche e mefatore che riappaiono nel capolavoro pulciano.

Chiestosi infine se la *Giostra* del Pulci debba essere considerata uno scritto encomiastico, una semplice esercitazione letteraria oppure il fedele resoconto degli avvenimenti del 7 febbraio 1469, il critico conclude ch'essa “cannot be simply categorized as any of these things, although it probably contains elements of all three”.

Orvieto, Paolo. "Sul rapporto *Morgante-Orlando Laurenziano*". *Die Ritterepik der Renaissance. Akten des Deutsch-Italienischen Kolloquiums*, Berlin 30. 3 - 2. 4, 1987. A c. di K. W. Hempfer. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989. 145-53.

Nel suo *Pulci medievale*, pubblicato nel 1978, l'Orvieto, considerato "tuttora irrisolto" il problema del rapporto fra il *Morgante* del Pulci e l'*Orlando* laurenziano, aveva affermato che un nuovo esame della questione era non solo necessario ma avrebbe potuto persino portare al capovolgimento della tesi, formulata dal Rajna e comunemente accettata dalla critica pulciana, della derivazione del *Morgante* dall'anonimo poema toscano.

In questo stimolante articolo, che riproduce il testo della comunicazione presentata nel 1987 al Colloquio Italo-Tedesco di Berlino, l'Orvieto affronta la questione allo scopo di dimostrare la dubbia attendibilità della tesi del Rajna.

La prima prova che il Rajna adduce a sostegno della sua tesi si basa sul "raddoppiamento" nel poema pulciano — Astolfo nel cantare XI e Ricciardetto nel XII — dell'episodio della cattura e della tentata impiccagione di Ricciardetto, che nell'*Orlando* ha luogo ai cantari XIX, 25 e XX, 35. Notato che il "raddoppiamento" può servire anche a dimostrare la tesi opposta — in quanto la "semplificazione di un duplice episodio in sostanza ripetitivo potrebbe costituire per sè un sintomo di posterità" facendo dell'*Orlando* un poema posteriore al *Morgante* — l'Orvieto sottolinea la presenza nell'anonimo cantare popolare di una "insanabile incongruenza" concernente il personaggio di Astolfo che, lasciata la corte di Carlomagno per andare a Montalbano insieme a Rinaldo, con cui si è schierato (XIX, 40-41), ricompare poi inspiegabilmente a Parigi dove, senza che il canterino accenni ad una previa riconciliazione e ritorno del duca a corte, lo vediamo soccorrere l'imperatore che Rinaldo ha fatto cadere da cavallo. L'Orvieto individua quale possibile ragione "del taglio" operato dall'autore dell'*Orlando* — l'eliminazione dell'episodio della tentata impiccagione di Astolfo — la religiosità del canterino (un dato di fatto riconosciuto anche dal Rajna) che si preoccupa di togliere dal suo poema "tutto ciò che non solo risultasse aperta parodia religiosa, ma che potesse solo ledere la suscettibilità delle autorità ecclesiastiche".

Il critico, che non manca di menzionare le incongruenze riscontrate dal Rajna nel *Morgante* — incongruenze che o sono assenti o appaiono risolte nell'*Orlando* — nota che in varie stanze del suo poema il Pulci "sembra fare esplicito riferimento a varianti da lui apportate alla versione originale", così come il poeta, nell'affermare l'originalità della figura di Margutte (XIX, 1-4), ammette l'esistenza d'una fonte del *Morgante*, comune anche all'*Orlando* laurenziano. Tale fonte, perduta o per lo meno non ancora ritrovata, potrebbe anche essere un *Cantare d'Orlando e di Carlo*, il cui nome, appare nei registri del Magistrato dei pupilli con data 1472.

L'Orvieto considera poi inaccettabili le argomentazioni del Rajna che vorrebbe la priorità dell'*Orlando* laurenziano provata dal fatto che il carattere di

Morgante, “appena sbizzato nell’*Orlando*”, viene poi “condotto alla perfezione nell’altro poema”. Sempre secondo il Rajna, il Pulci “guastando” il Morgante dell’anonimo avrebbe oltrepassato “ogni limite di credibilità”. A questo proposito l’Orvieto osserva che il titolo del poema fu imposto al Pulci “dal volgo stesso” proprio “perché . . . le imprese eroicomiche di quel gigante differenziavano il poema pulciano dagli altri di argomento carolingio” (fatto provato appunto dalla nota premessa al titolo dell’edizione ripolina del 1481).

Un’ulteriore argomentazione del Rajna concerne lo scontro delle amazzoni, suddite dell’Arpalista, con Ricciardetto, Guicciardo ed Alardo, mentre Rinaldo rimane in disparte ad osservarli (*Morgante*, XXII). Il Rajna considera inspiegabile il “dileggio” finale di Rinaldo nei riguardi dei fratelli, che dovrebbero essere lodati dal momento che sono risultati vincitori. Nell’*Orlando*, invece, il rimprovero di Rinaldo appare giustificato dalla ignobile fuga dei paladini. Come giustamente spiega l’Orvieto “il Rajna non si è minimamente accorto che al Pulci non interessa affatto attestare il tradizionale valore combattivo riconosciuto alle Amazzoni, né tantomeno il ‘motteggiare’ di Rinaldo esprime alcuna valutazione sull’esito del combattimento; non si è accorto che il Pulci si esibisce in un gustosissimo exploit di polisemia erotico-sessuale, di cui il ‘religiosissimo’ autore dell’*Orlando* laurenziano cancella ogni traccia”.

La prova che l’Orvieto ritiene sia “decisiva”, proponendo a sua volta l’ipotesi della derivazione dell’*Orlando* laurenziano dal *Morgante*, risiede nelle stanze 44-45 dell’ottavo cantare del capolavoro pulciano. In queste due stanze si apprende che Lionfante rivela ad Astolfo che i Saraceni vogliono distruggere Montalbano per vendicare la morte di Mambrino ch’essi credono sia stato proditoriamente ucciso da Rinaldo. Nelle corrispondenti stanze dell’*Orlando* (XIII, 19-20), invece, Lionfante domanda assurdamente ad Astolfo di esporgli i motivi per cui lui [Lionfante], obbedendo agli ordini di Erminione, ha cinto d’assedio Montalbano. Secondo l’Orvieto, l’“unica ipotesi” valida a spiegare l’illogica richiesta del Lionfante laurenziano è che il suo autore avrebbe erroneamente interpretato il senso della stanza 45 del *Morgante*, la quale, priva del punto e virgola chiarificatore che l’Ageno ha apposto alla fine del secondo verso nella sua edizione del poema, può indurre il lettore a fraintenderne il significato, come avrebbero appunto fatto il canterino e alcuni moderni editori del poema.

Come lo stesso Orvieto riepiloga al termine del suo articolo, mentre le “argomentazioni di Pio Rajna non provano in alcun modo la anteriorità dell’*Orlando* laurenziano al *Morgante*”, esse servono invece a confermare “l’ipotesi dell’esistenza di un oggi perduto *Cantare d’Orlando*”, al quale tanto il Pulci quanto l’anonimo poeta avrebbero attinto. L’*Orlando* laurenziano, “datato dallo stesso Rajna agli ultimi decenni del secolo XV (1480-90 circa) integra il testo del *Cantare di Orlando* con il *Morgante*, del quale doveva avere a disposizione con ogni probabilità un’edizione già a stampa (la prima di cui abbiamo notizia è del 1478) in ventitré cantari”.

Ponte, Giovanni. "Attilio Momigliano e gli studi sul Pulci e sull'Ariosto". *Rassegna della Letteratura Italiana* 93, 1-2 (Gennaio-Agosto 1989): 43-57.

Ricordato che l'interesse del Momigliano per l'opera del Pulci, oggetto della sua tesi di laurea, si esercitò durante i primi anni della sua attività di critico letterario, mentre gli studi sull'Ariosto appartengono agli anni della maturità dello studioso, il Ponte rammenta (43-9) le conquiste e i limiti della critica pulciana del Momigliano, ch'egli esamina in relazione all'estetica crociana e alla critica positivista.

Dal momento che ciò che maggiormente conta per il Momigliano è "l'interiorità del poeta, e quindi la storia della sua anima", egli è quasi naturalmente portato ad analizzare la personalità del Pulci e la sua "peculiare tendenza al riso". Siffatta tendenza trarrebbe origine dall'indole essenzialmente allegra del poeta, continuamente stimolato "dalla festosità dell'ambiente umano del suo tempo", nonostante le vicende spesso tristi della sua tormentata vita.

Il Ponte, riconosciuto al Momigliano il merito di aver ricollegato il *Morgante* sia alla tradizione dei cantari cavallereschi, sia alla poesia satirico-burlesca toscana del XIII secolo, osserva che l'autore de *L'indole e il riso di Luigi Pulci* non ammette che si possa rintracciare nel poema pulciano una qualsiasi intenzione di satira della cavalleria. Anche se l'interpretazione che il Momigliano dà di Gano è discutibile, è nondimeno vero che questo personaggio offre al grande studioso "l'appiglio per scrivere la pagina artisticamente più riuscita del saggio"; saggio che, nonostante le sue varie "discontinuità", deve essere considerato un contributo definitivamente notevole alla conoscenza della cultura, dell'indole e dell'opera del Pulci.

Pulci, Luigi. *Morgante*. 2 voll. Introduzione, note e indici a c. di Davide Puccini. Milano: Garzanti, 1989.

1990

Di Paolo, Maria Grazia. "Osti e osterie nel *Morgante* del Pulci". *Forum Italicum* 24, 1 (Spring 1990): 80-93.

Reputando, sulle orme del Momigliano, che la giocondità sia "l'intrinseca essenza del poema del Pulci", in questo suo articolo la Di Paolo esamina la figura e il ruolo dell'oste, personaggio definito "una costante notevole nel *Morgante*" e "tema che rimane . . . ancora da riprendere e sviluppare".

L'attenzione della studiosa si concentra principalmente sul Dormi (canto XVIII e XIX) e su Chiarione (canti XX e XXI), che spiccano fra gli osti che popolano il poema pulciano "perché con essi l'osteria non si pone più come un semplice sfondo, ma diventa un elemento dinamico delle vicende di cui fa parte".

Particolarmente interessante è l'interpretazione che la studiosa offre del comportamento scherzosamente ingannatore e al tempo stesso sorprendentemente gentile di Margutte nei riguardi del Dormi, ritenuto "l'oste più riuscito di tutto il

poema" e uno "tra i personaggi minori meglio delineati di tutto il *Morgante*". Notato che l'episodio si svolge nello spazio di tre diversi tempi (la *sera* dell'arrivo dei due giganti all'osteria, la *notte* della beffa di Margutte e l'*alba* della loro fuga), la studiosa rileva che Margutte, assicurandosi che l'ingenuo oste non gli capiti improvvisamente fra i piedi mentr'egli è intento a far razzia, evita in tal modo a se stesso la necessità di dover infliggere al Dormi la fine da lui fatta fare al papasso suo padre. Per la Di Paolo il fatto che Margutte appaia non aver intenzione alcuna di arrecare un male fisico all'oste, anche se può essere considerato soltanto "un tenue barlume", vale a presentarci tuttavia "nello stesso momento in cui svanisce, un Margutte diverso, un Margutte che crede in qualche altra cosa, oltre che nella *torta* e nel *tortello*".

Ratti, Maria Pia. "*Avaler la tradition: sul bestiario del Morgante*". *Lettere Italiane* 42, 2 (Aprile-Giugno 1990): 264-75. Premesso che i numerosissimi e svariati elementi zoologici presenti nel *Morgante* ne "determinano la singolarità", la Ratti prende in esame due noti passi del poema — il padiglione di Luciana e la storia dell'incontro di Rinaldo con il leone che lotta con un drago — in cui è possibile individuare sia le innovazioni apportate alle fonti letterarie (bestiari e cantari) da cui il Pulci attinge, sia il travolgimento parodico da lui operato. Nel caso del padiglione istoriato di Luciana ciò che maggiormente differenzia questo passo dalle "sintetiche rassegne faunistiche degli altri cantari" è che il Pulci "quasi mai si limita a menzionare semplicemente l'animale, ma procura di norma un ritratto, anche alquanto accurato, delle sue proprietà". Egli opera quindi un processo di amplificazione, certo favorito dalla sua considerevole conoscenza del mondo animale.

I cantari in cui, oltre al XIV (quello cioè del padiglione di Luciana) è descritto il maggior numero di animali sono il XVIII e il XIX. Come osserva la Ratti, questi animali che, salvo la testuggine, "fanno tutti parte della fauna più sfruttata dai bestiari" sono destinati ad appagare l'insaziabile e dissacrante voracità di Morgante e di Margutte.

A proposito dell'episodio di Rinaldo e del leone del IV cantare, risulta evidente che, mentre nelle prime ottave il Pulci pare seguire da vicino la narrazione dell'*Yvain* di Chrétien de Troyes evitando "ogni intento evidente di parodia", nelle stanze successive invece il leone "si rivela al tutto disutile". Esso, infatti non interviene a soccorrere Rinaldo nei momenti di maggior pericolo, ma si limita a fare da semplice spettatore ed a seguire per un certo tempo il paladino che gli ha salvato la vita. Come scrive la Ratti la "rappresentazione comica di questo tradizionale episodio etico-zoologico tocca forse il culmine" quando la fiera esce improvvisamente di scena e la sua sparizione viene stranamente spiegata da Rinaldo e accolta con evidente sollievo da Orlando. Secondo la Ratti l'intento del Pulci, nell'introdurre nel suo poema quest'episodio tradizionale che ha un finale apparentemente "incoerente e sconclusionato", è quello di "depistare il lettore, facendogli credere, all'inizio, di trovarsi di fronte alla riproposizione di

un fatto ormai consueto e accettato, e scombinandogli poi d'improvviso le carte in tavola".

Vincenti, Eleonora. "I protagonisti del Pulci". *Filologia e Critica* XV (1990): 521-32.

Le considerazioni che la Vincenti fa in questo articolo — suggeritele, com'essa riconosce, dalle analisi di strutture antitetiche operate dall'Orvieto nel suo *Pulci medievale* — nascono dalla convinzione che, non riuscendo a individuare nel poema un tema centrale, il *Morgante* sia strutturato in base ad alcuni personaggi, o più specificamente "intorno ad alcune coppie o terne" i cui rapporti unificanti o contrastanti determinano le varie vicende della narrazione.

Viene così indicata la coppia Olivieri-Rinaldo, dove Rinaldo costituisce "la brutta copia del perfetto paladino", e il trio Carlo-Orlando-Rinaldo, rispetto ai quali Gano esercita la funzione di "*diabolus ex machina*", mentre Orlando risulta essere "l'unica figura assolutamente positiva". Buono, o "trattato altrettanto bene dal punto di vista morale", è anche Morgante, fedele seguace di Orlando, così come Margutte lo è, anche se brevemente, di Morgante e il Veglio della Montagna lo è poi di Rinaldo.

Classificati a gruppi di due sono anche i personaggi femminili del poema: Alda e Chiariella, Luciana e Antea, Forisena e Meridiana, Uliva e la figlia del re Falcone, nonché Bianca e Brunetta. Occupano, invece, un posto a se stante Gallerana e Florinetta.

A questo punto non è molto chiaro cosa la Vincenti intenda dire quando, in polemica col Rajna circa la derivazione delle donne guerriere nell'epica italiana, dichiara che le Amazzoni dell'Arpalista fanno nel *Morgante* "una tristissima, o meglio ridicolissima, figura". Pare che la Vincenti, enfatizzando l'ovvia differenza fra queste donne pelose e brutte e le nobili, belle e, all'occorrenza, anche valorose Meridiana, Antea, Luciana e Chiarella, si limiti a dare un'interpretazione in chiave del tutto seria dell'episodio, mancando in tal modo di recepire il reale significato della presenza di queste non certo tradizionali figure di Amazzoni nel poema pulciano.

Le protagoniste femminili del poema sono quindi considerate in funzione dei personaggi maschili con cui esse vivono storie d'amore. Di Meridiana la Vincenti conclude, affermazione che non ci sentiamo di condividere, che la giovane "si è 'realizzata' nelle sue relazioni con la Cristianità, o anzi che in questo appunto consiste il suo amore per Olivieri". Di Luciana vengono elogiate le sue eccezionali capacità di ricamatrice e le sue "doti intellettuali", mentre di Antea, definita "la vera controfigura di Rinaldo", la studiosa giustamente rileva il desiderio di gloria che le fa mettere l'amore per Rinaldo in secondo piano.

Più convincente è il giudizio che la Vincenti esprime su Florinetta, definita "la figura più eterea e intellettuale del poema", e la cui storia è narrata in occasione del suo singolare incontro con Morgante e Margutte, i "due personaggi più primitivi" del capolavoro pulciano: "Quello di Florinetta . . . è, a mio

parere, un vero e proprio *Bildungsroman*, la storia di una presa di coscienza e di una maturazione elaborata sotto l'influsso di una sventura sentita come una punizione o una prova da una persona completamente ingenua, direi primitiva (quindi, in un certo senso, apparentata ai suoi salvatori)".

1991

Puccini, Davide. "Ipotesi su *berzo* (*bierzo*)". *Lingua Nostra* 52, 2-3 (Giugno-Settembre 1991): 54-55.

In questa breve nota il Puccini, curatore dell'edizione Garzanti del *Morgante* (1989), amplifica il commento ivi dato a spiegazione di *berzo* (XXI, 134, 5), aggiungendo ai tre testi citati — il sonetto LXXXVII del Pulci, il *Ciriffo Calvaneo* (V, 38, 6) e il dialogo *La Raffaella* del Piccolomini —, un quarto — la novella del picchio scambiato per un pappagallo — in cui il termine *biezo* è usato con logico riferimento "alla testa piuttosto che alla mano". Ricordato che Diego Valeri, curatore del dialogo del Piccolomini, annota "la crocchia" per *berzo*, il Puccini scrive che il passaggio da "crocchia" a "testa" è possibile e che viene anche confermato dal passo del *Ciriffo*. La conclusione raggiunta dallo studioso — *berzo* (*bierzo*) = "cimiero" — è la stessa proposta nel commento alla sua edizione del *Morgante*.

1992

Pulci, Luigi. *Morgante*. 2 voll. Introd. e note a c. di Giuliano Dego. Torino: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1992.

1993

Ankli, Ruedi. "L'asse iperbolico della struttura narrativa del *Morgante* di Luigi Pulci". *Cenobio* 2 (1993): 187-95.

Come annotato in margine alla prima pagina, le considerazioni espresse in questo articolo delineano il metodo di lavoro e riassumono le conclusioni raggiunte dall'Ankli nella sua tesi dottorale, dalla quale egli ha tratto, rielaborandola, il lungo saggio intitolato *Morgante iperbolico. L'iperbole nel Morgante di Luigi Pulci* (Firenze: Olschki, 1993).

Ricordato che la definizione dell'iperbole (che può essere qualitativa o quantitativa) non è mutata nel tempo, mentre invece, grazie ai contributi della linguistica e della semantica, se ne dà oggi un diverso giudizio (l'iperbole è ora considerata "come figura generatrice, come principio"), lo studioso svizzero rivela che l'approccio quantitativo da lui applicato allo studio del *Morgante* ha riscontrato che nel poema ci sono 1494 iperboli, per l'analisi delle quali è stata necessaria una classificazione in sette diversi gruppi (litote, proposizioni ipotetiche, formule comparative o consecutive, paragoni, metafore e così via). Pur riconoscendo che tali distinzioni non servono ad accertare "il valore dell'iperbole nel contesto del poema", esse permettono tuttavia al critico "di valutare meglio i registri topici e le soluzioni adottate dal Pulci".

Una volta completato l'esame delle "forme, contesti, misure e varianti" dell'iperbole nel *Morgante*, l'Ankli ha esteso la sua indagine ad altri cinque poemi cavallereschi in ottava rima — *Orlando*, *Spagna*, *Uggieri*, *Rinaldo* e *Fierabraccia* — che, messi a confronto con il *Morgante*, hanno evidenziato le somiglianze e le differenze col poema pulciano il quale, pur appartenendo al genere cavalleresco, risulta distaccarsi notevolmente dalle norme che regolano tale genere. Le statistiche fornite dal confronto confermano, fra le altre cose, la preferenza del Pulci (54%) per il paragone, la similitudine o la metafora. Sul piano qualitativo, invece, il confronto ha appurato che mentre le iperboli, rese con giochi di parole, sono numerose nel *Morgante* e peculiari di quest'opera, negli altri poemi, "più legati agli stereotipi del canone tradizionale", esse s'incontrano soltanto occasionalmente. Il fatto che il Pulci faccia uso frequente della litote, dimostra inoltre che il poeta non rifiuta il patrimonio della tradizione, ch'egli "trasforma" e "rinnova sovrapponendo modelli diversi a quelli consueti", col risultato di creare iperboli più complesse e sorprendenti.

L'analisi, successivamente condotta "sul piano narrativo e paradigmatico", permette allo studioso di dichiarare che l'iperbole "è una struttura portante del *Morgante*", e che il Pulci "ha rimodellato la topica e . . . il repertorio mitologico non solo medievali, ma soprattutto toscani". Lo studio dei vari tipi di iperboli, presenti nei primi sette cantari del poema (e precisamente I-VII, 13), evidenzia il lavoro stilistico operato dal Pulci che, se attinge dappertutto, inventa anche continuamente "con una creatività innovatrice" atta a rivoluzionare "le forme stereotipate e il codice tradizionale".

Particolarmente importante è l'iperbole del colpo (il critico ne ha classificate oltre trecento) che, pur non essendo tipica del *Morgante*, "costituisce un fattore onnipresente" al punto da poter essere considerata "un asse portante" del poema. Nel *Morgante* "il colpo è stilizzato in modo personale, e serve soprattutto a caratterizzare alcuni personaggi-chiave del poema", in particolare Rinaldo, Orlando e Morgante, che, insieme ad altre figure principali, "si distinguono, nell'azione, grazie a particolarità proprie". L'Ankli identifica come "motore" del colpo iperbolico il verbo, "centro di paragoni e descrizioni variatissime". Fondamentale nella struttura narrativa del *Morgante* è "il cambio di registri", che differenziano il poema pulciano dai cantari cavallereschi dove le iperboli sono "topiche e stereotipate". Altri importanti elementi distintivi sono "il paragone, la similitudine, la metafora", in continua evoluzione nel *Morgante*.

Come scrive infine l'Ankli, "Pulci non si è rivolto al mondo cavalleresco con un atteggiamento nostalgico, e nemmeno con ambizioni 'rivoluzionarie', ma con una forte spinta di edonismo dissacrante: trasformatore e innovatore e, proprio grazie all'iperbole, ha dato prova di un realismo cosciente dei limiti del suo mondo di invenzione."

Ankli, Ruedi. *Morgante iperbolico. L'iperbole nel Morgante di Luigi Pulci*. Firenze: Olschki, 1993.

La parte centrale di questo studio è costituita dai capitoli III e IV in cui l'autore passa ad analizzare le iperboli dal piano del discorso a quello narrativo. Decisamente interessanti le pagine 214-225 dove viene discusso il tema del vanto e quello di Morgante in particolare. Il Pulci, rileva l'Ankli, "ha riscoperto la natura iperbolica del vanto" che costituisce "un elemento preciso della [sua] narrativa, e non è più quel cliché tramandato dalla tradizione canterina, ma rivela il desiderio di tenere viva la curiosità e l'attesa del lettore" (217). Notevole è poi il dettagliato esame dell'iperbole del colpo che nel *Morgante* "ha perso quanto aveva di mitologico, per guadagnare sul piano della caricatura e della comicità" (235). A questo riguardo si leggano le pagine 252-321 dedicate a Morgante ("personaggio . . . per sua natura destinato al colpo iperbolico"), a Rinaldo ("l'eroe più citato del *Morgante* . . . e la controparte del saggio Orlando") e a Orlando ("sul piano umano . . . il ritratto più completo di un cavaliere del *Morgante*").

Terenzio, V. "Il Pulci Minore". *Oggi e domani*. Pescara (gennaio-febbraio, 1993).

Di quest'articolo non ci è stato possibile ottenere copia.

1994

Ankli, Ruedi. "Un problema di attribuzione sempre aperto: il *Ciriffo Calvaneo*". *L'attribuzione: teoria e pratica*. Atti del Seminario di Ascona, 30 settembre - 5 ottobre, 1992. A c. di O. Besomi e C. Caruso. Basel: Birkhäuser, 1994, 259-304.

Quello della mancata definizione del *corpus* delle opere o sezioni di opere, attribuibili con certezza alla penna di Luigi Pulci, è un problema di cui da tempo i critici si lamentano. L'ampio e documentato saggio che Ruedi Ankli dedica alla questione della paternità del *Ciriffo Calvaneo* contribuisce pertanto a risolvere uno degli elementi del "puzzle" pulciano.

Dopo aver ricordato che il problema dell'attribuzione del *Ciriffo* è stato negli ultimi quarant'anni trascurato dalla critica, lo studioso svizzero passa in rassegna, elucidandoli, i vari aspetti del problema, quindi affronta "l'enigma" delle ventinove ottave aggiunte al *Ciriffo Calvaneo*, riportando e commentando le spiegazioni avanzate dalla Mattioli e dal Marchetti. Convinto che il problema della "collaborazione" di Luigi Pulci alla stesura del *Ciriffo* può essere chiarito qualora si riscontri in esso lo stile e la tecnica narrativa del *Morgante*, il critico sostiene e prova, con un'accurata quanto convincente analisi intertestuale, che nel *Ciriffo* si ritrova quella tendenza alla duplicazione e al capovolgimento di personaggi e situazioni che lo stesso studioso, nel suo *Morgante iperbolico* ha dimostrato essere procedimento tipico del *Morgante*. Alcuni personaggi del *Ciriffo* rivelano somiglianze notevoli con personaggi del capolavoro pulciano; fra questi, Falcone, che "è a metà strada tra Margutte e Gano, del primo ha tutte le astuzie, dell'altro il vizio del tradimento".

Nell'ultima parte del saggio, propostosi di "esaminare se il Ciriffo Calvaneo senza l'aggiunta (delle ventinove ottave) è il prodotto di una collaborazione a quattro mani" (Marchetti), oppure "un poema composto dai due fratelli in due fasi successive" (Mattioli), Ankli fa una lunga e minuziosa analisi delle figure retoriche e in particolare del colpo iperbolico. Dato che la maggiore concentrazione di questo tipo di iperbole si trova nella descrizione delle battaglie del capitolo III del *Ciriffo*, il critico ha considerato un campione di circa cento ottave (97-200), constatando fra le iperboli del *Ciriffo* e quelle espresse in corrispondenti luoghi del *Morgante* "un legame più o meno diretto". Nel *Ciriffo* si trovano inoltre passi, coincidenze, vocaboli, paragoni, immagini, versi e persino intere ottave o sezioni di ottave, che rivelano spiccate somiglianze o punti di contatto con il *Morgante*. Se la "frequenza e la tessitura dei legami incontestabili tra i due poemi possono già bastare per riconoscere l'unica mano di un autore", la presenza nel *Ciriffo* di formule sintattiche peculiari del *Morgante* non può che confermare la tesi della paternità di Luigi. L'Ankli, per il quale può anche essere plausibile che il Pulci si sia servito del *Ciriffo* "come campo d'esercizio per la redazione degli ultimi cantari del suo poema maggiore", conclude la trattazione fiducioso che il legame da lui dimostrato fra le iperboli del *Morgante* e quelle del *Ciriffo* confermi "il fatto che sul piano dell'analisi retorico-stilistica si trova un altro mezzo per attribuire la maggior parte del *Ciriffo* (cioè con ogni probabilità da II 26 in poi) piuttosto a Luigi che a Luca".

Indiana University

Rassegna della critica boiardesca: 1983-1994

Introduzione

Ripetendo, dopo dieci anni, l'esperienza di redigere un saggio sulla bibliografia boiardesca non posso fare a meno di notare il proliferarsi di scritti sull'*opera omnia* di Matteo Maria Boiardo. Libri e saggi si sono per lo meno quadruplicati, e non credo solamente per l'approssimarsi del quinto centenario della morte del poeta! I mezzi d'approccio critico più sofisticati e le iniziative dell'Istituto Ferrarese di Studi Rinascimentali (ISR) hanno potuto permettere questo grado di progresso.

Oggi l'opera del Boiardo viene affrontata complessivamente: l'esperienza culturale delle opere minori si riversa e si rispecchia nella maggiore, il poema epico, *Innamoramento de Orlando*, dal titolo ormai comunemente accettato dagli studiosi come unica forma fornita di attestazioni coeve. Il poema epico boiardesco viene analizzato ora sotto vari aspetti: (1) quello filologico, per cui si attende la nuova edizione critica de *l'Innamoramento de Orlando* a cura di Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti e Cristina Montagnani. Per la ricostruzione della storia materiale del testo sono strumenti fondamentali sia la *Bibliografia dell'Orlando innamorato*, a cura di Neil Harris, sia le concordanze e il rimario pubblicati da David Robey e Marco Dorigatti. (2) C'è poi lo studio dei miti (Andrea Gareffi, Cristina Montagnani e Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti) e delle fonti classiche del poema (Cristina Zampese). La tradizionale ricerca generale delle fonti del poema epico si è incanalata verso l'analisi dei mezzi e strumenti poetici del Boiardo (3) con i lavori di Marco Praloran, Marco Tizi, Cristina Cabani, Mauda Bregoli-Russo, Riccardo Bruscelli e Cristina Montagnani. Nei saggi di Bruscelli e Montagnani si usano i termini di "decontestualizzazione" e "decodificazione" boiardesca, indicanti quel particolare modo di poetare del Boiardo teso a smembrare le fonti. (4) Si sono moltiplicati gli studi sui rapporti del poema boiardesco con le opere minori ed altre opere italiane e straniere (del Pulci e di Milton) tramite i saggi di Antonio Franceschetti, Charles Stanley Ross, Neil Harris e Stefano Carrai. In questa sede si vuole sottolineare l'originale studio di Carrai per cui *l'Innamoramento de Orlando* "costituirebbe l'immediata risposta di Ferrara al tentativo di Firenze di affermare (o riaffermare) la propria egemonia anche nel genere per eccellenza padano della poesia epico-cavalleresca" (116). Dal versante americano in questi anni si sono verificati molti avvenimenti: l'opera di traduzione in inglese di tutto il poema epico boiardesco a cura di Charles Stanley Ross, la versione in inglese degli *Amorum Libri* a cura di Andrea Di Tommaso e l'approccio critico americano di Jo Ann Cavallo che fin dalla sua *Ph. D.*

Dissertation ha approfondito le tre categorie d'amore nel poema di Boiardo. Poiché nella personalità e nell'opera letteraria di Matteo Maria Boiardo vediamo riflessa la multiforme vita ed i vari usi linguistici del ceto non incolto del secondo Quattrocento estense, sono subentrati in questo periodo studi sulla lingua del Boiardo (Maria Antonietta Acocella, Francesco Bruni e Paolo Trovato) e sul suo modo particolare di tradurre. A tal proposito l'opera di Edoardo Fumagalli, *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell' "Asino d'Oro"*, è una pietra miliare nella critica del poeta di Scandiano.

Nell'ultimo decennio, lentamente ma insistentemente, si è fatta strada la raccomandazione di tenere presente, nell'*opera omnia* boiardesca, il pubblico, l'uditorio particolare a cui Boiardo si rivolgeva e che modificava il modo di scrivere del poeta e determinava le tematiche delle opere. Se per questo aspetto possiamo citare vari saggi di Riccardo Brusagli e Paul Larivaille, tuttavia sono stati soprattutto Edoardo Fumagalli e Antonio Franceschetti a centrare il problema. Il primo ha detto, a proposito della traduzione del Boiardo, che "il pubblico gentile e smalzato, fosse un pubblico di lettori o di ascoltatori o di spettatori, era certo in grado di cogliere, nei frutti del lavoro letterario degli autori in voga, le citazioni implicite e le allusioni ad altri scritti contemporanei" (157-158). Franceschetti ha parlato di Boiardo come di un poeta che ama le gioie serene e i piaceri eleganti della vita ("ocio amoroso e cura giovanile") non l'intellettuale isolato che macera la sua vita sui libri (1990, 185).

Il lavoro filologico sui testi del Boiardo è senza dubbio fondamentale ma non rappresenta tutto quello di cui i boiardisti hanno bisogno. Manca ancora una sintesi critica atta a suggerire agli studiosi nuove strade da percorrere e idee originali da sperimentare. Come dice acutamente Riccardo Brusagli:

... la critica dell'*Innamorato* ancora attende il paziente lavoro chiarificatore di una ricerca capace, nientemeno, di ritornare alla vita un mondo frantumato, e per tante parti ormai irrimediabilmente perduto, qual è quello della civiltà cortigiana quattrocentesca (e primo cinquecentesca), raccogliendo dal grande naufragio delle guerre d'Italia e della mutazione culturale che ne seguì i segni superstiti ed ancora leggibili di un gusto letterario.

(1987, 11)

Partendo proprio da questa riflessione deriva la necessità di una collaborazione tra studiosi, un lavoro d'*équipe*, come si effettua nei campi scientifici, dove lo specialista filologo collabora con lo storico e lo studioso di fonti. Tutti, insomma, dovrebbero unire i loro sforzi per un risultato certo futuro. Ma se il lavoro organizzativo e direttivo di gruppo sembra ancora *in fieri*, esiste, tuttavia, la consapevolezza di ciò. Infatti è consolante constatare come la filologa Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti abbia riconosciuto il valore coadiuvante di uno studio del Franceschetti sul ciclo dell'*Aspromonte* per il recupero della lezione originale del

poema boiardesco (1992, 44).¹

Bibliografia 1983

1. Baldan, Paolo. *Mondo popolare e mondo aristocratico nel Boiardo*. In *Miscellanea di studi in onore di Vittore Branca*. III, 2. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1983, pp. 527-44.

Il poema rispecchierebbe la mentalità ed i gusti di una società aristocratica che, priva di un diaframma "borghese" (presente invece in quella fiorentina), si incontrerebbe senza problemi con la cultura "rurale".

2. Baruzzo Elisabetta. *Niccolo degli Agostini continuatore del Boiardo*. Pisa, Giardini Editori e Stampatori, 1983, pp. 158.

L'autrice ha dimostrato la pochezza del lavoro dell'Agostini che giunge al culmine del grottesco, come quando colloca ninfe e pastori, promuovendoli a pubblico, addirittura dentro i suoi poemi. Con questo lavoro la studiosa cerca di mettere in rilievo l'impatto sul pubblico delle varie operazioni editoriali e la personalità dei più risentivi o significativi emuli boiardeschi.

3. Benvenuti, Antonia Tissoni e Mussini, Maria Pia Sacchi. *Introduzione a M. M. Boiardo, Timone*. In *Teatro del Quattrocento. Le corti padane*. Torino: UTET, 1983, pp. 471-79.

L'ossessiva presenza di precise didascalie nel *Timone* di Boiardo porterebbe un contributo originale ed ancora non sfruttato alla storia della scenografia cortigiana quattrocentesca. L'attenzione registica alla scena, che giunge fino ad una elencazione precisa di costumi e praticabili, spinge la Tissoni Benvenuti ad amplificare con decisione il contributo del Boiardo agli spettacoli estensi, per quanto scarse siano le prove documentarie.

4. Brusca, Riccardo. *Il romanzo padano di M. M. Boiardo*. In

¹ Questa bibliografia boiardesca ragionata continua la mia precedente ("Annali d'Italianistica" 1 (1983): 159-173) e va dal 1983 al maggio del 1994. Si rimanda il lettore o lo studioso interessato alla consultazione di una bibliografia boiardesca, non ragionata, degli anni '90 compilata da Neil Harris: *Devant nous le déluge! Per una bibliografia boiardesca degli anni '90*. "Il Boiardo notiziario di informazione e di bibliografia boiardesca". Il Centro stampa del Comune di Scandiano. A c. di Giuseppe Anceschi. 1 (Giugno 1993): 9-11; 2 (novembre 1993): 20. Si è seguito un criterio cronologico, segnalando ogni opera sotto la data dell'anno di pubblicazione. Le opere dello stesso anno sono esposte in ordine alfabetico d'autore. Per il contenuto delle opere e degli articoli, elemento fondamentale di una bibliografia ragionata, si è cercato di fornire informazioni essenziali, valide per studi e ricerche sul Boiardo. Per la ricerca sono stati consultati i seguenti cataloghi e repertori bibliografici generali: 1. *MLA On Line* per la voce Boiardo. 2. *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*. London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1983-92; 3. *Library of Congress Catalog*. Washington: Library of Congress, 1988-92; 4. *Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche. Bibliografia nazionale italiana*. Nuova serie del bollettino delle pubblicazioni italiane ricevute per diritto a stampa. A c. di Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze. Roma: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico, 1988-1992; 5. Gli indici di consultazione di "Studi e problemi di critica testuale" (1983-1993), e le rassegne de "La rassegna della letteratura italiana" (1983-1992).

Stagioni della civiltà estense. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1983, pp. 33-86.

Il saggio si articola su una "parabola" di lettura dell'*Innamorato* chiudendola nell'eleganza di un nitido disegno. Viene sottolineata la cautela boiardesca: le trame della tradizione classica, gli intrecci borghesi della novella o della commedia devono passare al filtro di una normalizzazione ideologica per non contaminare valori e ritmi del mondo cortese.

5. Maglione, Sabatino. *Notas sobre la fecha y las fuentes de "Los celos de Rodamonte"*. "Bulletin of the Comediantes" 35 (1983): 153-64.

Tra le fonti della commedia di Lope de Vega, *Los celos de Rodamonte*, si segnala non solo il *Furioso* dell'Ariosto ma anche l'*Innamorato* di Matteo Maria Boiardo, in particolare l'episodio relativo alla morte di Agricane.

6. Pettinelli, Rosanna Alhaique. *L'immaginario cavalleresco nel rinascimento ferrarese*. Roma: Bonacci, 1983.

L'opera della Pettinelli mostra chiaramente cosa significhi per la critica contemporanea la tradizione positivista delle fonti. La studiosa analizza l'*Innamorato* attraverso le sue componenti culturali facendo riferimento anche a saggi anteriori, in particolare a "L'O.I. e la tradizione cavalleresca in ottava", apparso in *La rassegna della letteratura italiana* del 1967.

1984

7. Baldan, Paolo. *Metamorfosi di un orco. Un'invenzione folclorica nel Boiardo esorcizzata dall'Ariosto*. Milano: Unicopli, 1983 (1984).

Per il rapporto Boiardo-Ariosto il Baldan (in particolare nel capitolo quinto) segnala un'interpretazione "normalizzatrice" del *Furioso* perché l'Orco boiardesco viene collocato "nel cuore più antico della fiaba", mentre l'antagonista ariostesco non sarà altro che un Polifemo immerso nella classicità.

8. Limentani, Alberto. *Avvento d'Angelica. Appunti sul primo canto dell'Orlando innamorato*. In AA. VV., *Symposium in honorem Prof. M. de Riquer*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, Quadernis Crema, 1986, pp. 137-60.

Benché non sia proficua una lettura sistematica, di un canto alla volta, per il testo del poema boiardesco, ciò non toglie che l'esperimento possa portare qualche frutto, nel senso di tornare con occhi diversi al testo. Limentani sostiene che "la pratica" dell'*entrelacement* nel poema boiardesco non è del tutto disinvolta, e proprio qui fa ancora difetto agli studi quell'analisi che ha ora condotto Giuseppe Dalla Palma per il *Furioso*.

9. Moretti, Walter e June Salmons (a c. di). *The Renaissance in Ferrara and its European Horizons*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. Ravenna: Lapucci Girasolo, 1984.

Opera essenziale di consultazione per chiunque si occupi di Boiardo.

10. Spaggiari, William (a c. di). *G. B. Venturi. Autobiografia. Carteggi del periodo elvetico (1801-1813)*. Parma: Studio Parmense [Verona, Fiorimi], 1984, pp. 110-111.

L'opera è dedicata agli studi boiardeschi di Giovanbattista Venturi, editi ed inediti.

11. Weaver, Elissa. *Erotic Language and Imagery in Francesco Berni's* rifacimento. "Modern Language Notes" 99 (1984): 80-100.

Dove l'*Orlando* del Boiardo è una casta figura (dovuta ad impotenza), Berni tende a sottolineare l'omosessualità.

1985

12. Battera, Francesca. *Le redazioni dei "Pastoralia" del Boiardo e il modello virgiliano*. "Studi e problemi di critica testuale" 31 (1985): 63-78.

La studiosa pone l'ipotesi di due successive redazioni dei *Pastoralia*, che solo nella seconda manifesterebbero un'utilizzazione sistematica del modello virgiliano.

13. Bozzoli, Adriano. *La chiave dell'"Orlando furioso"*. Milano: Celuc Libri, 1985.

La tesi dell'autore è questa: il protagonista del poema ariostesco assume una configurazione differente da quella delineata nell'opera epica boiardesca. L'*Orlando* ariostesco non deve essere considerato altrimenti che un nuovo Orfeo, la cui vicenda è stata ripresa dall'Ariosto applicandola alla materia cavalleresca.

14. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *L'astrologia, l'"Innamorato" del Boiardo ed il "Milione" di Marco Polo*. "Studi e problemi di critica testuale" 30 (1985): 41-49.

L'articolo si muove entro due approcci critici dell'*Innamorato*, da una parte l'*entrelacement* e dall'altra l' intertestualità (il rapporto che una parola ha nel testo e nella sua allusività ad altri testi). Le opere conosciute dal Boiardo erano la *Cronaca dello Pseudo Turpino*, *Historia de Preelis*, il *De Venenis* di Pietro d'Abano, l'*Astronomicum* di Manilio e la *Historia Naturalis* di Plinio. La Bregoli-Russo ha anche preso in considerazione *Il milione* di Marco Polo come sub-testo del poema.

15. Fumagalli, Edoardo. *Da Nicolò Leonicensi a M. M. Boiardo: proposta per l'attribuzione del volgarizzamento in prosa del "Timone"*. "Aevum" 59 (1985): 163-177.

In questo importantissimo saggio lo studioso non solo conferma la paternità boiardesca del volgarizzamento di Apuleio, ma stabilisce anche i criteri per una edizione critica del volgarizzamento stesso: riesamina i numerosi errori d'interpretazione imputabili al testo latino che il traduttore aveva presente. Lo studioso esprime la necessità di un'edizione critica, non solo dell'*Apulegio volgare*, ma di tutte le traduzioni del Boiardo come condizione necessaria per una

vera edizione, restaurata nel testo e adeguatamente commentata, dell'*Innamoramento de Orlando*.

16. Marchetti, Giuseppe. *La bella storia di "Orlando innamorato" e poi "Furioso"*. In Ennio Grassi (a c. di). *Alfredo Panzini nella cultura letteraria italiana fra '800 e '900*. Rimini: Maggioli, 1985, pp. 281-283.

In queste poche pagine viene ripreso in mano e riletto un trattatello di Alfredo Panzini, pubblicato nel 1933 su "Nuova antologia", riguardante una "scrittura" sull'*Orlando innamorato* e la "dolce nostra ottava rima". L'articolo dimostra una "veggenza critica eccezionale", dice il Marchetti. Nel capitolo dodicesimo del trattatello si parla della stampa veneziana del poema del 1486 (sic) donata o collegata in qualche modo a Benito Mussolini!

17. Micocci, Claudia. *Appunti su Magia e astrologia nel canzoniere di Boiardo*. In Gianfranco Formichetti, *Il mago, il cosmo, il teatro degli astri: saggi sulla letteratura esoterica del rinascimento*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1985, pp. 35-65.

L'autrice sottolinea il ruolo di Ferrara nel dibattito sulla magia e astrologia.

18. Navarrete, Ignacio. *Boiardo's "pastorali" as a Macrotext*. *Stanford Italian Review* 5 (1985): 37-53.

Basandosi sul concetto di macrotesto, definito esaurientemente da Maria Corti nei *Principi della comunicazione letteraria* (1976), l'autore sostiene che le egloghe pastorali in volgare di Boiardo devono essere lette come una grande testo unitario direttamente legato alle egloghe virgiliane.

19. Quint, David. *La barca dell'avventura nell'epica rinascimentale*. "Intersezioni" 5 (1985): 467-488.

Nel saggio emerge il carattere totalmente aristocratico-avventuroso, proprio del Boiardo, che, però, rigetta l'avventura mercenaria. L'autore riconosce la fusione dei generi nel poema boiardesco: romanzi medievali francesi ed epica italiana.

20. Ruschioni, Ada. *Il sonetto italiano. Morfologia, profilo storico, antologia*. Volume I: 1200-1500. Milano: Celuc Libri, 1985. Pp. 171-176.

L'autrice riunisce alcuni sonetti scelti, tratti dagli *Amorum Libri* del Boiardo, lodandone l'immediata freschezza, spontaneità, semplicità e chiarezza del dettato.

1986

21. Cavallo, Jo Ann. *The role of the woman in the Orlando "Innamorato"*. *Carte Italiane* 8 (1986-87): 31-39.

Il ruolo della donna nel poema boiardesco è certamente originale e si distacca notevolmente dalla descrizione delle donne e del loro ruolo nei precedenti romanzi cavallereschi.

22. Ceserani, Remo. *Boiardo*. In *Dizionario critico della letteratura italiana*, a c. di Vittore Branca. Torino: UTET, 1986, seconda edizione, pp. 364-368.

Lo studioso riconosce che un'indagine attenta di tutto il poema nei suoi vari aspetti non è stata ancora condotta. L'autore conclude che "si nota, pur tra le ancora forti incertezze, una tendenza a riconoscere al Boiardo un'energia poetica robusta ed al suo poema doti di notevole piacevolezza e leggibilità".

23. Harris, Neil. *John Milton's Reading of the "Orlando innamorato"*. "La bibliofilia" 88 (1986): 25-43.

L'Inghilterra è un paese che, fin dai tempi di Edmund Spenser e di John Milton, aveva una conoscenza imperfetta della materia dell'*Innamorato*, considerata propedeutica a quella del *Furioso*.

24. Harris, Neil. *The "unicum" of the Second Edition of Boiardo's "Orlando innamorato" and a forgery of the last century*. "Rivista di letteratura italiana" 4 (1986): 519-536.

Cristina Montagnani e Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti stanno allestendo l'edizione critica del poema boiardesco. I lavori di Neil Harris introducono fondamentali verità sul versante della *recensio* come l'intervento sul restauro subito dall'edizione veneziana del 1487.

25. Marinelli, Peter V. *The Flight of Ariosto's Hippogriff: Genesis, Elaboration, and Function*. In *Ficino and Renaissance Platonism*, a c. di Konrad Eisenbichler e Olga Zorzi Pugliese. Toronto: Dovehouse Editions Canada, 1986, pp. 87-89.

Il volo è l'elemento che pone una differenza cruciale tra il *Furioso* e l'*Innamorato*: il volo raffigura il movimento ed il livello d'amore (in senso ficiniano) che è esso stesso un indice di come la vita possa risultare errabonda e umana (il caso di Ruggiero) o aspirare a qualcosa di più alto (Astolfo). Questi eroi sono legati tra loro e distinti dal loro cavalcare l'ippogrifo. Entrambi sono assolutamente distanziati da Orlando che è bestiale e che non vola per niente. Per Ficino la lussuria degli animali non è amore ma una condizione medica, cioè *insania*. Così Orlando "Paccio" in Boiardo al primo apparire di Angelica (canto primo) e "furioso" in Ariosto, in ricordo dell'*Ercole furente* di Seneca, diventa "insano" secondo i parametri di Ficino.

26. Sherberg, Michael. *Matteo Maria Boiardo and the Cantari di Rinaldo*. "Quaderni d'italianistica" 7 (1986): 165-181.

L'autore sceglie di misurare le intenzioni narrative boiardesche a partire dalla personalità dei personaggi: la coppia rivale Orlando/Rinaldo. Lo studioso svolge il tema del contrasto tradizionale fra paladini come affrontato nel poema: il Boiardo s'impadronirebbe di uno spazio narrativo intermedio tra la versione vulgata dei cantari e ogni possibile variante, mentre i personaggi rivivono la storia e la raccontano da opposti punti di vista.

27. Ulivi, Ferruccio. *Opere di Matteo Maria Boiardo*. Milano: Mursia, 1986, pp. XLV-1268.

In questa edizione si rinvencono sia una scelta di passi da *Pastorale*, *Timone*, e *Lettere* che l'edizione integrale di *Amorum Libri* e *Orlando Innamorato*. Per quanto riguarda l'attività esegetica il commento dell'Ulivi all'*Innamorato*

rappresenta il primo lavoro impegnativo del genere, anche se suscettibile di correzioni e di aggiunte.

1987

28. Battera, Francesca. *Per una lettura di "Orlando innamorato", I, XX-XXII.* "Studi e problemi di critica testuale" 34 (1987): 85-103.

Si segnala questo articolo per la consapevolezza metodologica con cui sono condotti gli studi sulle fonti di particolari aspetti del poema boiardo.

29. Beer, Marina. *Romanzi di cavalleria. Il Furioso e il romanzo italiano del primo Cinquecento.* Roma: Bulzoni (Europa delle Corti), 1987. Pp. 414..

La studiosa elogia il recupero del testo dell'*Innamorato* del Boiardo per opera di Antonio Panizzi (1830-1834). Le direttrici di metodo sono chiare: fonti ricercate in tutta la tradizione medioevale e romanza, epica e non epica, di cui *Innamorato* e *Furioso* sono il culmine, e ricerca attenta alla filologia delle stampe antiche di cui in quegli stessi anni Panizzi cominciava ad occuparsi. Il Rajna ricorderà queste note quasi quarant'anni dopo, in apertura delle sue *Fonti dell'Orlando furioso*. Il filo rosso, che corre attraverso la tradizione erudita settecentesca fino all'opera forse più emblematica del positivismo letterario in Italia, passa dunque obbligatoriamente per la prova isolata di filologo, comparatista e romanista di Antonio Panizzi.

30. Benvenuti, Antonia Tissoni. *Il mondo cavalleresco e la corte estense.* In *I libri di "Orlando innamorato"*. Ferrara ISR. Modena: Edizioni Pacini, 1987, pp. 13-21.

La studiosa, verificando ed integrando segnalazioni di autori precedenti, delinea gli orientamenti culturali della Corte dall'epoca di Niccolò III a quella di Ercole I, con particolare riferimento all'appassionamento di quella corte per la letteratura cavalleresca francese e italiana e all'intenso interesse con cui veniva seguita la composizione dell'*Innamorato* stesso. A proposito del quale si osserva che l'unico titolo attestato nei documenti dell'autore e dei suoi stessi contemporanei sia *Innamoramento de Orlando*.

31. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *Boiardo, Ariosto e i commentatori del Cinquecento.* "Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale". Sezione Romanza. 29 (1987): 77-86.

Con lo studio delle Imprese e degli Emblemi rinascimentali, condotti dalla Bregoli-Russo in questi anni, si è cercato di verificare, tramite i commentatori cinquecenteschi del *Furioso* (Porcacchi e Fomari), quanto tali autori fossero consapevoli della prospettiva simbolica nelle loro annotazioni sull'Ariosto.

32. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *La leggenda di Sir Lancillotto del lago e l'"Innamorato" del Boiardo.* "Esperienze letterarie" 1 (1987): 47-56.

L'autrice tenta di interpretare il motivo del bacio mostruoso dell'eroe, dato al

serpente drago, come un mito della tradizione arturiana trasmesso in maniera periferica nell'ambiente culturale del Boiardo. Lo scopo di questo saggio è duplice: illuminare l'episodio del Fier Baiser entro un reticolato narrativo dell'*Innamorato* ed indagare il misterioso modo di lavorare del Boiardo.

33. Bruscaagli, Riccardo (a c. di). *I libri di Orlando innamorato*. Modena: Edizioni Pacini, 1987.

Secondo il Bruscaagli la critica dell'*Innamorato* ancora attende il "paziente lavoro chiarificatore di una ricerca capace, nientemeno, di ritornare alla vita un mondo frantumato, e per tante parti ormai irrimediabilmente perduto, qual è quello della civiltà cortigiana quattrocentesca" (11).

34. Eboigbe, Delphia Elizabeth Robinson. Ph. D. Indiana University. DAI (*Dissertation Abstract Index*). "The Depiction of the Negro African in Three Old French Chansons de Geste and Two Renaissance Epic-Chivalric Poems". 1986, pp. 383, June 1987. 47:12, 4404A.

Uno degli aspetti dell'Umanesimo fu il concetto di uomo macrocosmo. L'autrice si chiede (tentando di risolvere il problema) in che modo quest'idea alteri la coscienza di sé dell'uomo occidentale e la sua relazione con il resto dell'umanità nel mondo reale d'integrazione sociologica e politica. Il terzo capitolo di questa dissertazione analizza le descrizioni dei negro-africani nell'*Orlando innamorato* di Boiardo.

35. Franceschetti, Antonio. *Ispirazione comica e dimensione umana nel "Timone" del Boiardo*. "Yearbook of Italian Studies" 6 (1987): 75-89.

Lo studioso promuove la lettura del *Timone* tenendo conto in primo piano della comicità che pervade l'opera, che non è una favola mitologica e pastorale come quella di Orfeo o quella di Cefalo, ma una "comedia" concepita nello spirito del teatro latino, soprattutto di Plauto, e come tale avvertita e annunciata dall'autore fin dall'inizio del prologo. Nel rivolgersi al genere teatrale il Boiardo ha inteso approfondire quelle venature presenti anche in momenti e situazioni dell'*Innamorato*.

36. Gareffi, Andrea. *La memoria di Boiardo. Miti greci, palinsesti latini, materia di Francia*. "Schifanoia" 4 (1987): 25-30.

Si accenna alla lettura, non certa ma plausibile, di Apollonio di Rodi da parte del Boiardo. Tale studio si può riallacciare all'opera intrapresa da Cristina Zampese sulla cultura classica nell'*Orlando innamorato*.

37. Giampaoli, M. Tania. *Petrarca e il petrarchismo nel rifacimento dell'"Orlando innamorato" di Francesco Berni*. In AA. VV. *Scritture di scritture: testi, generi, modelli nel Rinascimento*. A c. di Giancarlo Mazzacurati e Michel Plaisance. Roma: Bulzoni, 1987, pp. 509-524.

Uno dei cambiamenti del rifacimento berniano è la trasposizione delle formule

della narrazione canterina in moduli più raffinati, basati su modelli classici antichi e su modelli moderni toscani. Per esempio nell'*incipit* del poema riscritto il Berni si rivolge a un pubblico tra stilnovistico e petrarchesco: "Leggiadri amanti e donne innamorate".

38. Harris, Neil. *L'avventura editoriale dell'"Orlando innamorato"*. In AA.VV. *I libri di "Orlando innamorato"*. Modena: Edizioni Pacini, 1987, pp. 35-63.

Questo ampio saggio è stato concepito come una premessa alla bibliografia dell'edizione dell'*Orlando innamorato*, con lo scopo di "ricreare quel ricco contesto editoriale e tipografico in cui il poema boiardesco s'inserisce".

39. Harris, Neil (a c. di). *Orlando innamorato*. Stampa anastatica dell'edizione di Piero de' Piasi. Bologna: Forni, 1987.

Quest'opera rappresenta la storia dell'unico esemplare rimasto dell'edizione veneziana del 1487 del poema.

40. Marinelli, Peter V. *Ariosto and Boiardo: The Origins of "Orlando furioso"*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987.

L'autore si propone di esaminare l'*Innamorato* del Boiardo e il *Furioso* dell'Ariosto ponendoli sotto una lente critica moderna, non ignara di teorie di *entrelacement* e di studi di miti, imprese e allegorie. Il problema fondamentale è quello di stabilire un sistema nel metodo compositivo dell'Ariosto che lavora sul testo di Boiardo: la relazione tra i due poemi si configura nei termini di un palinsesto - un manoscritto pergameneo su cui un primo testo affiora in maniera da poterci scrivere sopra un altro testo.

41. Micocci, Claudia. *Zanze e parole. Studi su Matteo Maria Boiardo*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1987.

La studiosa discute l'episodio di Morgana, particolarmente nelle pagine 79-88. La Micocci scrive: "... la figura boiardesca di Morgana sembra sviluppare molteplici possibilità di legami con analoghe figure e situazioni dell'antica poesia latina e della mitologia classica, sia nel suo significato autonomo che, largamente, nelle congiunzioni e convergenze che manifesta con le immagini di Angelica e dell'Antonia del canzoniere" (82).

42. Praloran, Marco. *La battaglia di Montealbano nell'"Orlando innamorato": analisi di alcune tipologie del discorso epico. "Schifanoia" 3 (1987): 29-43.*

Prendendo come esempio la battaglia di Montealbano nell'"Innamorato" (gli eserciti di Marsilio e Carlo Magno stanno combattendo sotto Montealbano quando Agramante finalmente decide di partire verso la Francia) lo studioso mette in evidenza come il racconto boiardesco, invece di una successione lineare, occupi vari *cadres* spaziali, tenendo in vita più unità, dilatando quindi in senso orizzontale il luogo del combattimento in vari nuclei su cui la narrazione e, figurativamente, la macchina da presa passa alternativamente. Ad un centro narrato si oppongono altri centri narrati implicitamente e in continuo dinamismo

perché articolati su degli eventi in atto. Se per Bruscagli l'atteggiamento del narratore nell'*Innamorato* è quello del "telecronista", per Praloran diventa quello del "regista".

43. Visani, Oriana. *La tecnica dell'esordio nel poema cavalleresco dai cantari all'Ariosto. Schifanoia 3* (1987): 45-84.

L'Innamoramento di Galvano si riallaccia all'*Innamorato* nella tecnica dell'esordio di cantare, dove manca l'invocazione religiosa tradizionale, sostituita, come nel poema boiardesco, da invocazioni mitologiche o da appelli al pubblico.

44. Weaver, Elissa. *Riformare l'"Orlando innamorato"*. In *I Libri di Orlando innamorato*. A c. di Riccardo Bruscagli. Modena: Edizioni Panini, 1987. Pp. 117-144.

Da una esauriente collazione la studiosa ha potuto determinare il fatto che il Berni adoperò una o più edizioni della tradizione testuale che fa capo all'edizione del 1511 (Venezia, Rusconi).

45. Spaggiari, William. *Panizzi e l'"Orlando innamorato"*. In AA.VV. *I Libri di Orlando innamorato*. Modena: Edizioni Panini, 1987. Pp. 145-150.

Per il testo del poema, Panizzi si fondò su un gruppo di edizioni che vanno da quella milanese del 1513, presso Leonardo Vegio, a quella veneziana del Nicolini (1544), ultima a proporre l'*Innamorato* originale: inaccessibili gli rimasero ovviamente l'apografo trivulziano e le primissime stampe, a partire dall'unico esemplare di quella del 1487 allora di proprietà di Gaetano Melzi.

1988

46. Alexandre-Gras, Denise. *L'héroïsme chevaleresque dans le Roland Amoureux de Boiardo*. Saint Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1988. Pp. 396.

Il volume è un'opera filologica nel senso che l'autrice ripercorre il poema di Boiardo verso per verso, analizzando ogni parola, ogni congiunzione o preposizione per dimostrare le sue varie tesi. L'opera si divide in tre parti: la prima svolge i temi della battaglia e dell'amore; la seconda approfondisce i temi dello scetticismo, del comico e dell'umorismo nel poema; la terza svolge i temi dei nuovi valori cortesi e umanistici del Boiardo.

47. Badini, Caterina. *Rassegna boiardesca*. "Lettere italiane" 40:2 (1988): 281-296.

Questo studio rappresenta un piccolo paradiso per i boiardisti, i quali possono rinvenirvi un compendio dei nuovi indirizzi critici. L'indagine bibliografica della Badini mantiene una divisione tradizionale per generi più per scelta di comodità espositiva che per riproporre una ormai superata suddivisione tra Boiardo lirico e romanzesco.

48. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *I tarocchi nel rinascimento italiano*. In *Letteratura italiana ed arti figurative*. A c. di Antonio Franceschetti. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1988. Pp. 405-415.

L'articolo fa riferimento all'arte e all'influenza petrarchesca (*I trionfi*). Per le cognizioni astrologiche i tarocchi ferraresi si differenziano nettamente da quelli del Mantegna di Mantova e da quelli dei Visconti di Milano.

49. Cabani, Maria Cristina. *Le forme del cantare epico-cavalleresco. L'Unicorno, Collana di testi e di critica letteraria diretta da Luigi Blasucci, 2.* Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore. 1988. Pp. 224.

La studiosa ha descritto dettagliatamente le forme del cantare epico cavalleresco suddividendole in prologo, epilogo, interruzione e cambiamento di narrazione con relativa partecipazione emotiva e adeguamento di tono; intreccio stentato e minimo di episodi, misura e aspetto metrico. L'opera è uno strumento utile per la critica boiardesca.

50. Cavallo, Jo Ann. Ph. D. Yale University. DAI Dissertation Abstract Index. "Acquisitive and Benevolent Desire in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*". 1987. Pp. 198. April 1988. 48:10, 2641A. Basandosi sulle teorie di Robert G. Hazo e Denis De Rougemont, l'autrice studia le tre categorie d'amore nel poema boiardesco: eros puro come nella tradizione cortese; agape fino all'esclusione dell'eros come nelle leggende del Santo Graal, ed infine eros temperato da agape come nel matrimonio cristiano.

51. Everson, Jane E. *Syntax and Style in Il Mambriano of Francesco Cieco da Ferrara.* In *The Language of Literature in Renaissance Italy.* A c. di Peter Hainsworth, Valerio Lucchesi, Christina Roaf, David Robey, e J. R. Woodhouse. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. Pp. 191-210.

Per stabilire il tipo di sintassi e la struttura dell'ottava usate nel contesto dell'opera del Cieco di Ferrara, la studiosa procede ad una paragone statistico tra un numero scelto di canti dell'*Innamorato* e del *Furioso*. Si giunge alla conclusione che il Cieco ottiene nel *Mambriano* un livello sintattico più sofisticato di quello mostrato dal Boiardo.

52. Fumagalli, Edoardo. *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell'"Asino d'oro". Contributo allo studio della fortuna di Apuleio.* Padova: Antenore, 1988. Pp. 350.

Lo studioso dimostra che il volgarizzamento apuleiano è attribuibile a Matteo Maria Boiardo perché dipendente dalla *princeps* di Apuleio del 1469. Si esclude quindi l'ipotesi che a compiere tale impresa fosse stato il nonno del Boiardo Feltrino, morto più di dieci anni prima. Inoltre Fumagalli individua nell'incunabolo conservato alla Huntington Library di San Marino in California un testimone molto vicino a quello che dovette essere seguito dal Boiardo. Il fatto che tale volgarizzamento fu letto e ricercato non solo alla corte estense ma anche presso quella gonzaghesca di Mantova e l'esistenza delle citazioni di Niccolò da Correggio e Galeotto Del Carretto, tutto contribuisce a rendere l'*Apulegio volgare* qualcosa di più che un episodio isolato della vita cortigiana.

53. Harris, Neil. *Bibliografia dell'"Orlando innamorato".* Saggio

analitico, illustrazioni, indici. Modena: Edizioni Panini, primo vol., 1988; secondo vol. 1991.

L'opera di questo appassionato studioso di Boiardo è uno strumento indispensabile per chi voglia soffermarsi sulle vicende tipografiche e le varie fasi di ricezione e contraffazione del testo boiardesco. Neil Harris ha lavorato su sette aree di ricerca diverse: 1) le edizioni del testo originale stampate prima del 1500; 2) le edizioni del testo originale con aggiunte (Nicolò Degli Agostini, Raffaele Valcieco di Verona, Pierfrancesco dei Conti da Camerino); 3) il rifacimento del Berni; 4) la versione in sei libri del Domenichi; 5) la versione di quel Rimaneggiamento "raffazonata" da Michel Bonelli; 6) il rifacimento del Berni ristampato fra Sette e Ottocento; e 7) il recupero di Panizzi del 1830-31. E ciascuna di esse (nel secondo volume) ha generato monografie su queste vicende testuali.

54. Marinelli, Peter V. *Shaping the Ore: Image and Design in Canto I of "Orlando furioso".* "Modern Language Notes". 1. *Italian Issue* (January 1988): 31-49.

Lo studioso sostiene che l'Ariosto aveva presente mentalmente tutto l'Innamorato del Boiardo mentre componeva il *Furioso*. Così l'Ariosto adoperava a piene mani vari punti del poema boiardesco per creare il materiale del suo primo canto. Impiegando la tecnica della compressione e della ripetizione, Ariosto iniziò a concettualizzare il testo di Boiardo ed a emblematicizzare azioni ed immagini.

55. Montagnani, Cristina. *Per l'edizione dell'"Orlando innamorato": una premessa linguistica.* "Studi di filologia Italiana" 46 (1988): 31-61.

Per riconsiderare criticamente il testo dell'*Innamorato* occorre prendere come base il manoscritto Trivulziano (T) e le sue due più antiche stampe, Venezia 1487 (P) e Venezia 1506 (R). La Montagnani e la Tissoni Benvenuti hanno come scopo quello di esaminare, in una nuova prospettiva, i rapporti fra i più antichi testimoni. In questo saggio la Montagnani ha dato un primo contributo allo studi di T.

56. Praloran, Marco e Tizi, Marco. *Narrare in ottave: metrica e stile dell'"Innamorato".* Premessa di Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1988. Pp. 295.

Uno sguardo diverso sulla tecnica narrativa dell'*Innamorato* sembra annunciato dalle analisi recentissime di Praloran condotte su un confronto dei testi più diffusi della tradizione cavalleresca francese e della tradizione canterina italiana. Partendo da osservazioni metrico-ritmiche sulla morfologia dell'ottava canterina e boiardesca, si giunge qui a prospettare nell'*Innamorato* la ricostruzione cosciente di un clima epico tramite una narrazione volta sempre all'evento. Si perviene alla definizione di un Boiardo "commentatore in presa diretta" più che "romanziero".

57. Ross, Charles. *Boiardo and the Derangement of Epic.* "Renaissance Papers" (1988): 77-97.

Qui si esprime il concetto di "derangement" come alterazione di valori epici del buono e del diabolico effettuata dal Boiardo, che crea un poema per la corte di Ferrara politicamente conservatrice ma culturalmente innovatrice.

58. Ross, Charles Stanley. *Orlando innamorato by Matteo Maria Boiardo*. Trans. with an introduction and notes by Charles Stanley Ross. Foreword by Allen Mandelbaum. English verse edited by Anne Finnigan. Los Angeles: California UP, 1988.

Quest'opera è la prima completa traduzione in inglese dell'*Innamorato* del Boiardo. Tale avvenimento rappresenta una pietra miliare per l'epica rinascimentale, rinfocolando le speranze che i lettori e gli studiosi di lingua inglese-americana possano raggiungere una migliore comprensione di un testo così cruciale per la letteratura italiana. Il testo italiano, qui ristampato, è l'edizione di Aldo Scaglione (1963, seconda edizione) dal momento che il Ross non ha potuto usufruire della nuova edizione che si sta preparando a cura delle studiose Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti e Cristina Montagnani. L'introduzione è divisa in tre sezioni: nella prima il Ross si sofferma sulla accoglienza di Boiardo nel mondo inglese; nella seconda si delineano la vita e le opere del Boiardo, e, infine, nella terza, il Ross spiega dettagliatamente le aperture dei canti e il torneo del canto II che i lettori moderni hanno difficoltà ad apprezzare. L'inglese di Ross si presenta semplice e diretto. La traduzione evita un adeguamento troppo alla lettera privilegiando l'oralità stilistica di Boiardo.

59. Tizi, Marco. *Elementi di tradizione lirica nell'"Orlando innamorato": presenze e funzioni*. In *Narrare in ottave. Metrica e stile nell'"Innamorato"*. Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1988.

Lo studioso si concentra sull'uso del codice lirico nel contesto narrativo dell'*Innamorato*. Tuttavia gli elementi di connessione formale tra testo emissario e testo immissario nel caso del Boiardo possono mancare o anche fornire indicazioni depistanti.

1989

60. Battera, Francesca. Recensione a: Edoardo Fumagalli, *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell'"Asino d'oro". Contributo allo studio della fortuna di Apuleio nell'Umanesimo*. Padova: Antenore, 1988. Pp. 352. In *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 39 (ottobre 1989): 209- 214.

La studiosa sostiene che il lavoro di Fumagalli, pur meticoloso e denso di risultati, non risolve i problemi sollevati dal volgarizzamento. Il fatto di aver attribuito a Matteo Maria il volgarizzamento edito nel 1518 non apre uno spiraglio sulla sua gestazione e sulle relazioni che presumibilmente intreccia con il precedente del nonno Feltrino.

61. Bigi, Emilio. *La poesia latina del Boiardo*. In *Poesia latina e volgare nel Rinascimento Italiano*. Napoli: Morano, 1989. Pp. 79-100.

Per la poesia latina l'Ariosto si ricollega ad una tradizione ferrarese di cui il Bigi ricostruisce la fisionomia caratterizzandone i diversi passaggi: dalla maniera semplice e discorsiva della fase iniziale, fino alla metà del Quattrocento, alla svolta in direzione di una poesia più ricca, più difficile e peregrina impressa dal Boiardo.

62. Brusca, Riccardo. *Prove di commento all'“Orlando innamorato”*. “Studi Italiani” 1, 2 (1989): 5-29.

Lo studioso prende in considerazione l'esistenza di significativi apporti della cultura classica nell'*Orlando innamorato*. Tale impostazione risulta originale perché a lungo i critici sono stati propensi a vedere nel Boiardo uno scrittore sostanzialmente istintivo e refrattario alla tradizione colta.

63. Davis, Elizabeth Hunt. Ph. D. Bryn Mawr College. DAI (Dissertation Abstract Index, title: “Between Poetic Truth and Historical Falsehood: Fictions of Chivalry in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*. 1988, pp. 302), Febr. 1989, 49:8, 2240A.

Costruito sullo schema di un poema epico caricatura di sé, l'*Innamorato* tenta di preparare la corte estense ed i loro cortigiani ad interagire in una nuova società del Cinquecento, dove la forza organizzativa è rappresentata dalla cortesia e dalla cavalleria.

64. Franceschetti, Antonio. *La novella nei poemi del Boiardo e dell'Ariosto*. In *La novella italiana*. Atti del Convegno di Caprarola (19-24 settembre 1988). Roma: Salerno, 1989, Tomo II, pp. 805-840.

Il Boiardo ha assunto la novella, nel poema cavalleresco, soprattutto per mostrare le capacità di assorbimento e l'ampia gamma delle possibilità aperte al genere che egli cercava di caratterizzare. Come sintesi ideale di differenti esperienze letterarie, l'Ariosto ha inteso perfettamente il valore di quella innovazione a livello di poetica, ma ha preferito estendere la portata della sua lezione facendo di quei momenti delle parti integranti nella struttura del libro. Franceschetti ricostruisce anche la storia dell'identificazione delle novelle negli indici delle edizioni cinquecentesche.

65. Harris, Neil. *Notes on Milton and the “Orlando innamorato”: The Albraca Simile in “Paradise Regained”*. “Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate” 42 (1989): 325-347.

Milton dipende molto dalla versione berniana dell'*Innamorato*. Harris insiste su questo punto, sostenendo anche che Berni, molto più che Boiardo, denigra continuamente il paladino Orlando.

66. Miller, Leo. *Milton's “Oxenbridge” Boiardo Validated*. “Milton Quarterly” 23 (1989): 26-28.

Nella biblioteca dell'Università dell'Illinois esiste un volume contenente l'*Innamorato* del Boiardo insieme ai tre libri di Nicolò Degli Agostini, già riformati dal Domenichi (Venezia 1608). Tale stampa reca un'indicazione di appartenenza a Daniel Oxenbridge che la donò all'amico John Milton. Con gli

studi recenti, particolarmente quelli di Neil Harris, riguardanti la conoscenza di Boiardo da parte di Milton, si ripresenta attuale il problema della validità dell'iscrizione Oxenbridge e dell'appartenenza a Milton del volume della biblioteca dell'Università dell'Illinois.

67. Robey, David, e Marco Dorigatti (a c. di). M. M. Boiardo: "Orlando innamorato". *The Machine-Readable Text, Microfiche Concordance and Rhyme Dictionary, with Related Statistical Data*. Oxford: Oxford University Computing Service, 1989.

Fornire un'opera come l'*Innamorato* di concordanze e rimario significa riconoscere in essa un classico ed anche vuol dire che l'interesse per il Boiardo si sta ormai spostando dalla narrazione al testo. Concordanze e rimario offrono l'opportunità di sondare i valori propriamente formali del poema epico boiardesco. Mentre il testo stampato permetteva solo una lettura sequenziale, secondo l'ordine stabilito dall'autore, quello computerizzato trascende questa costrizione, consentendo la lettura simultanea di luoghi testuali che possono essere anche estremi.

68. Santoro, Mario. *Ariosto e il Rinascimento*. Napoli: Liguori, 1989, pp. 383.

Sempre nell'ambito di un confronto tra l'*Innamorato* e il *Furioso*, il Mario Santoro apporta spunti acuti ed interessanti al problema, insistendo sul fatto che fra Boiardo e Ariosto c'è il 1494. C'è la crescente cognizione, nella coscienza dei contemporanei, di una realtà segnata da irrazionalità e da violenza, di fronte agli incalzanti e sconvolgenti eventi della situazione politica e sociale.

69. Staebler, Mark. *Selections from Boiardo's "Orlando innamorato"*. Preface by Paolo Valesio. American University Studies, 2: Romance Languages and Literatures, 101. New York: Lang, 1989. Pp. XVII-466.

Staebler ha tradotto il primo canto dell'*Innamorato* ed ha eseguito felicemente una scelta di canti trattati come episodi. In tutto l'autore ha tradotto un ottavo del poema; il testo italiano è a fronte. Il volume, che contiene una prefazione di Paolo Valesio, una lunga introduzione di Staebler, un sommario completo della trama ed una selezione dell'*Orlando innamorato* di Robert Tofte del 1598, rappresenta una buona introduzione al Boiardo presso un pubblico anglo-americano che non è in grado di accedere al testo originale.

1990

70. Anselmi, Gian Mario. *Boiardo e i classici antichi*. "Quaderni del giornale filologico ferrarese. Umanesimo Ferrarese". Ferrara: Industrie Grafiche, 1990. Pp. 3-7.

L'autore sottolinea in particolare la visitazione di un testo fondamentale per l'intera cultura padana, quell'*Asino d'oro* di Apuleio che, commentato nella vicina Bologna da Beroaldo, si costituirà come referente essenziale nella letteratura rinascimentale di tutta Europa: dal livello più magico e fantastico caro

al Boiardo, a quello iniziatico allegorico vicino ai filosofi ermetici ed ai nicodemisti veneti-padani dell'era Tridentina.

71. Baldan, Paolo. *Marfisa: nascita e carriera di una regina amazzone*. In *L'intrigo e l'avventura (tra Ligurio e Orlando)*. Contributi e proposte. Collana di letteratura italiana diretta da Mario Pozzi. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1990. Pp. 72- 83.

Il nome e la funzione di Marfisa, Marthesia, vengono consegnati, quasi sicuramente, al Boiardo dopo aver percorso una strada che da Giustino, passando per Orosio, giunge sino al Boccaccio (*Teseida* del commento di Pier Andrea dei Bassi, Ferrara 1475).

72. Baldan, Paolo. *Un tempestivo continuatore del Boiardo (su Nicolò degli Agostini)*. Recensione a : Elisabetta Baruzzo. *Niccolò Degli Agostini continuatore del Boiardo*. Pisa, 1983. Pp. 158. In *L'intrigo e l'avventura (tra Ligurio e Orlando)*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1990. Pp. 128-131.

L'Agostini può essere al tempo stesso tanto regressivo quanto innovativo rispetto al Boiardo. Le novità regressive consistono in una specie di irriflessa ricostituzione dei moduli canterini già originalmente superati nell'ambito dell'*Innamorato*.

73. Baldan, Paolo. Sul Berni rifacitore dell'*Innamorato*. Recensione a H. F. Woodhouse. *Language and Style in a Renaissance Epic: Berni's Corrections to Boiardo's "Orlando innamorato"*. London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1982. Pp. 238. In *L'intrigo e l'avventura*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1990. Pp.132-137.

Il grande merito di Woodhouse è quello di aver seguito e illuminato tutte le fasi del complesso ed articolatissimo lavoro bernesco. Lo ha fatto da linguista e storico della lingua.

74. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *L'impresa come ritratto del Rinascimento*. Napoli: Loffredo, 1990.

Per quanto riguarda l'opera di Boiardo sui Tarocchi l'autrice tenta di approfondire, in vari punti del libro, il rapporto fra iconografia (iconologia) impresistica e tarocchi. Poiché nell'*Innamorato* (I, 5:70) Boiardo descrive decisamente una sfinge egizia, la Bregoli-Russo giunge alla conclusione che alla Corte Estense di Ferrara, sede del Boiardo, era vivida una cultura rivolta agli studi sui geroglifici degli antichi Egizi (184).

75. Calzone, Sergio. *La foresta abitata*. In *Teoria e storia dei generi letterari. I mondi impossibili: l'utopia*. Torino: Tirrenia Stampatori, 1990. Pp. 65-80.

L'autore sostiene che non bisogna arrogare alla sola figura di Orlando precedenti letterari frutto di incrociarsi di generi: l'iniziazione di Ruggiero alle armi, così come ci è descritta nell'*Innamorato* (II, 16-17), ha certamente una parentela stretta con il conflittuale rapporto d'amore-abbandono che il Perceval di Chrétien

de Troyes ha con la madre, ma, insieme, non è strano ricordare l'analoga iniziazione di San Francesco: il celebre ripudio del padre terreno dell'aprile 1207, la sua "conversione" (Ruggiero, maomettano, si convertirà anche lui grazie all'eremita), il suo farsi predicatore errante, il suo prevedibile destino di rapida morte terrena.

76. Canova, Andrea. *Una traccia della princeps dell'"Orlando innamorato"?* "Italia medioevale umanistica" 33 (1990): 355-358.

Viene pubblicata una lettera del vescovo Ludovico Gonzaga a Ruffino Gabbioneta, 9 giugno 1484, in cui si accusa ricevuta del "libro volgare" di Orlando. Il Canova riconosce in quell'opera l'accenno ad una copia della *editio princeps* dell'*Orlando innamorato* di Matteo Maria Boiardo stampata tra il 1482 e il 1483. La lettera di Ludovico costituirebbe una precoce attestazione della diffusione del poema.

77. Dorigatti, Marco. *Concordanze, rimario e testo critico: il caso Boiardo.* "Studi e problemi di critica testuale" 40 (1990): 51-67.

Dorigatti riporta qui, con leggeri mutamenti, la relazione presentata al convegno organizzato dall'Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali, Ferrara, 25-28 maggio 1989. In essa vi si afferma che l'iniziativa delle concordanze del rimario dell'*Innamorato* proviene, come la rinascita del testo originale, dal paese che ospitò l'esule Panizzi. E sebbene non paragonabile all'impresa operata dal Panizzi, questa le si unisce a complemento nel favorire quella finale restaurazione del testo critico ormai tanto attesa.

78. Franceschetti, Antonio. *L'allegoria nell'"Orlando innamorato" del Boiardo e del Berni.* In *La Corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo 1441-1598*. A c. di Marianne Pade, Lene Waage Peterson e Daniela Quarta. Modena: Panini, 1990. Pp. 177-188.

Lo studioso presenta alcune sue perplessità sull'opera di Michael Murrin, *Allegorical Epic* (1980), per quanto riguarda l'allegoria nel poema boiardesco. L'*Innamorato* è un'opera che ha bisogno di un pubblico che comprenda e condivida quelle esperienze: non perché sia l'autore ad adeguarsi agli ideali del suo pubblico, ma perché questi ideali coincidono con quelli dell'autore. Col Berni ci troviamo di fronte al caso del poeta che cerca di coprire la distanza esistente fra l'opera ed il suo lettore, perché condizionato dal gusto del suo ambiente. Franceschetti riconosce a Dionisotti e a Brusagli il merito di aver sottolineato la crisi in cui va incontro il poema cavalleresco nell'arco dell'ultimo ventennio del Quattrocento. Per questo motivo la situazione muta completamente quando passiamo dall'*Innamorato* del Boiardo a quello del Berni.

79. Franceschetti, Antonio. Recensione a: Edoardo Fumagalli. *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell'"Asino d'oro". Contributo allo studio della fortuna di Apuleio nell'Umanesimo.* Padova: Antenore, 1988. Pp. 352. "Lettere italiane" (Aprile-giugno 1990): 335-340.

Franceschetti considera il lavoro di Fumagalli un passo in avanti fondamentale negli studi sul Boiardo e si augura che un maggior numero di studiosi si interessino alle altre traduzioni dello Scandianese.

80. Larivaille, Paul. *Poeta, principe, pubblico dall'“Orlando innamorato” all'“Orlando furioso”*. In *La Corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo*. A c. di Marianne Pade, Lene Waage Petersen e Daniela Quarta. Modena: Panini, 1990. Pp. 9-32.

Lo studioso porta esempi del Boiardo e dell'Ariosto sufficienti a dimostrare quanto, sotto le apparenti analogie ed affinità delle materie trattate, dei pubblici e perfino dei gusti, le opere di due poeti, vicini nel tempo e nello spazio, possano differire in funzione della personalità, delle condizioni sociali e materiali proprie di ciascuno, degli avvenimenti e della storia che modifica i rapporti fra scrittori e pubblico.

81. Luparia, Paolo (a c. di). *Rassegna bibliografica*. “Giornale storico della letteratura italiana” 167 (1990): 82-135.

Luparia recensisce molti e notevoli volumi nella sua rassegna: l'edizione delle opere del Boiardo a cura dell'Ulivi (1986), la ristampa anastatica dell'edizione Piero da Piasi 1487 dell'*Innamorato* a cura di Neil Harris (1987); *I libri di Orlando innamorato* (1987); l'opera del Fumagalli sul volgarizzamento dell'*Asino d'oro* (1988); il lavoro di Praloran e Tizi sulla metrica e stile dell'*Innamorato*; e, infine, il grande lavoro di Alexandre Gras sull'eroismo cavalleresco nell'*Innamorato*.

82. Looney, Dennis. *Recent Trends in Ariosto Criticism: “Intricati rami e aer fosco”*. *Modern philology* 88 (1990): 153-165.

Dennis Looney recensisce tre saggi sull'Ariosto. Vorrei segnalare in questa sede la sua discussione nei riguardi del libro di Peter V. Marinelli, *Ariosto and Boiardo* (1987). Marinelli parla dell'*Innamorato* come subtesto del *Furioso* stabilendo una relazione fra i due poemi nei termini di palinsesto. Looney critica la nozione di palinsesto perché troppo semplificatrice rispetto alla poetica dell'Ariosto ed alla straordinaria intertestualità del *Furioso*.

83. Mazzacurati, Giancarlo. *Le carte del Boiardo (Giochi d'amore e di Tarocchi)*. In *Ecrire à la fin du Moyen-Age. Le Pouvoir et L'écriture en Espagne et en Italie (1450-1530)*. Aix-En-Provence Cedex i: Publ. Univ. De Provence, 1990. Pp. 269-300.

Lo studioso discetta sui tarocchi boiardeschi come mezzi per ribadire la disponibilità dell'intera manifattura lirica boiardesca all'ordine geometrico ed alle sequenze sistematiche. Una vocazione, quella di Boiardo, che poteva anche prestarsi alla disseminazione spettacolare delle carte poetiche, in funzione dell'intrattenimento e della comunicazione sociale a corte.

84. Micocci, Claudia (introduzione e note a c. di). *M. M. Boiardo. Canzoniere (Amorum Libri)*. Milano: Garzanti, 1990. Pp. XXXVI-244.

Per il testo delle liriche la studiosa riproduce qui l'edizione critica degli *Amorum Libri* di Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo. Per quanto riguarda l'apparato di note, la Micocci ha tenuto presente tutte le edizioni annotate, a cominciare da quelle di Panizzi, Solerti, Steiner, fino alle più recenti di Zottoli, Scaglione e Ulivi. L'introduzione è suddivisa in tre parti: la vita, gli *Amorum Libri* ed una guida bibliografica. Ottimo lavoro!

85. Molinari, Cesare. *Caratteri del Boiardo lirico nella verseggiatura tragico-satirica di Gian Battista Giral di*. "Studi di filologia italiana" 48 (1990): 43-80.

Dopo aver attentamente vagliato, alla luce delle formulazioni contenutistiche nel *Discorso intorno al comporre dei romanzi*, alcune caratteristiche prosodiche della satira, il Molinari giunge a questa conclusione: nella stesura dell'*Egle* è il Boiardo dell'*Amorum Libri* a guidare le scelte del Giral di, più del Petrarca, del Bembo e dell'Ariosto.

86. Montagnani, Cristina. *Fra mito e magia: le "ambages" dei cavalieri boiardeschi*. "Rivista di letteratura italiana" 8 (1990): 261-285.

Il Boiardo dell'*Innamorato*, nei suoi rapporti con i modelli, procede secondo una traiettoria (in senso trasversale) che va dalla fonte classica, alla sua contaminazione con quella romana, ad un classicismo più chiaramente accusato nel terzo libro. La Montagnani apporta esempi convincenti e mette in evidenza le modalità intertestuali: si va dalla "duplicazione" nel *continuum* narrativo di alcuni miti, alla loro rielaborazione e ricomparsa in segmenti lontani del testo, all'allusione a "mode" culturali, come quella relativa ad Ercole presso la corte estense.

87. Praloran, Marco. *Meraviglioso artificio: tecniche narrative e rappresentative nell'"Orlando innamorato"*. L'Unicorno. Collana di Testi e di Critica Letteraria diretta da Luigi Blasucci. Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 1990.

Meraviglioso non è solo il tema delle avventure, ma anche la strategia formale con cui esse vengono raccontate, dice Praloran. La strategia risulta dal modo in cui Boiardo e Ariosto conducono l'*entrelacement*. Così, in via preliminare, ecco la necessità di indagare le caratteristiche dell'*entrelacement* in due testi modello per l'*Innamorato*, il *Lancelot* e il *Guron courtois*. Il punto di Praloran è questo: Boiardo si serve dell'*entrelacement*, che nei romanzi arturiani è tecnica conoscitiva, con finalità più moderne di *suspense* e di tensione. Il poema presenta un'altissima densità di accadimenti, narrati però in un tempo praticamente reale. Ad un esame approfondito della rappresentazione scenica in un episodio esemplare, la battaglia di Montealbano, Praloran dedica il secondo capitolo del libro. Il terreno epico consente al Boiardo di sperimentare un tipo di narrazione "a fuochi aperti" con una "continua transizione tra centro e centro". Le conclusioni che emergono sono le seguenti: lo stile dell'*Innamorato* e la narrazione affrontano gli stessi valori prediletti del mondo figurativo del secondo

Quattrocento, cioè la rappresentazione della forza, del movimento, la spezzatura, i bruschi passaggi tonali e prospettici.

88. Pade, Marianne, Lene Waage Petersen e Daniela Quarta (a c. di). *La Corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo 1441- 1598. The Court of Ferrara and its Patronage*. Atti del convegno internazionale. Copenaghen, maggio 1987, pubblicati dal Forum for Renaissance-studier Kosbenhauns Universitet, in collaborazione con l'Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali. Ferrara: stampato in Danimarca, 1990. Pp. 367.

Il convegno di Copenaghen (21-23 maggio 1987), di cui il libro costituisce la raccolta degli atti, ha avuto come scopo lo studio delle relazioni tra signore/principe e intellettuale, tra le arti e le scienze in una corte umanistico-rinascimentale. La scelta d'individuare come modello Ferrara è nata dal fatto che la città e il suo territorio furono sotto la signoria estense per un periodo straordinariamente lungo rispetto all'instabilità delle altre signorie italiane.

1991

89. Acocella, Maria Antonietta. *Alcune considerazioni su Boiardo traduttore*. "Schifanoia" 11 (1991): 63-79.

Boiardo, secondo l'autrice, poteva forse masticare male il greco, di cui aveva pur appreso qualche rudimento, ma la sua conoscenza del latino è indiscutibile, data la formazione umanistica da lui ricevuta e il suo esordio letterario come poeta latino con i *Carmina de Laudibus Estensium* (1463) e i *Pastoralia* (1463-64). In quest'ultima raccolta Boiardo non nascose l'ambizione di diventare il "Virgilio estense" per cantare in versi epici le gesta di Ercole I d'Este. Per il versante volgare non si può dire che Boiardo non possedesse la sensibilità linguistica per distinguere la capacità del volgare di assorbire dei latinismi crudi nel suo contesto, come dimostra l'elaborazione lessicale degli *Amorum Libri* che avviene negli anni 1466-76.

90. Anselmi, Gian Mario. Recensione a: Edoardo Fumagalli. *Matteo Maria Boiardo volgarizzatore dell'"Asino d'oro". Contributo allo studio della fortuna di Apuleio nell'Umanesimo*. Padova: Antenore, 1988. Pp. 352. "Critica letteraria" (1991): 404-406.

Anselmi ribadisce soprattutto la necessità di guardare a tutta l'opera di volgarizzatore del Boiardo, opera costantemente volta all'universo della narrativa, all'interesse primario per le storie antiche e medievali. Proprio entro questa vocazione narrativa del Boiardo si colloca l'approccio ad Apuleio, maestro per eccellenza dell'affabulazione romanzesca antica. Diversamente da Bologna, ove i professori umanisti e Beroaldo, attirati dall'introspezione della glossa erudita, si accostano proprio all'Apuleio maestro di saperi iniziatici. Tra Ferrara e Bologna dunque si gioca intorno ad Apuleio una partita di non poco conto per la nostra tradizione letteraria.

91. Benvenuti, Antonia Tissoni. *Di alcuni nuovi studi sull'“Innamoramento de Orlando”*. “Rivista di letteratura italiana” 9, 1-2 (1991): 181-193.

La Tissoni Benvenuti fa qui il punto su alcuni nuovi studi sull'*Innamoramento de Orlando*, titolo autenticamente legalizzato dell'opera boiardesca. Si parla di Maria Cristina Cabani, di Marco Praloran, Marco Tizi, Neil Harris, ecc. La studiosa è convinta che la limitata fortuna dell'*Innamorato* risieda nella sua provincialità linguistica, e cioè nell'incompatibilità del genere cavalleresco di illustre ascendenza medievale con la nostra tradizione retorica d'impianto classico, forgiata su altri modelli. La ricerca della Cabani (*Le forme del cantare epico-cavalleresco*) risulta utilissima per il futuro commento all'*Innamorato*, non solo per l'abbondante messe di riscontri ma soprattutto per aver posto in rilievo la connessione tra i modi narrativi tipici dei cantari e la destinazione spettacolare del genere, l'oralità.

92. Bigi, Emilio. *Gli studi boiardeschi dell'ultimo ventennio*. “Cultura e scuola” (1991): 32-40.

Lo studioso mette in rilievo la tendenza della critica attuale a soffermarci su argomenti specifici, tecnico-formali, inerenti all'opera del Boiardo. Il Bigi conclude la sua rassegna con una raccomandazione: “chi intenda rendersi conto della indubbia originalità artistica del Boiardo, deve puntare non tanto su una sua calcolata e consapevole misura e disciplina stilistica e narrativa, quanto invece sulla sua “dismisura”, sul suo aggressivo dinamismo e sul suo ilare e vigoroso starei per dire espressionismo. . . .”

93. Cavallo, Jo Ann. *A Note on Dante in Boiardo*. “Lectura Dantis” 8 (Spring 1991): 100-107.

La Cavallo esamina il ruolo della *Commedia* nell'*Innamorato* per quanto riguarda la concezione dell'amore.

94. Curti, Luca. *Vigaso Cocaio*. “Rivista di letteratura italiana” 9, 1-2 (1991): 119-176.

Teofilo Folengo morì nel 1544. Tra le sue carte restava incompiuta l'ultima redazione della *Macaronee*. Nel 1551 il librario Giovanni Varisco otteneva dal senato veneto il privilegio di stampa per la nuova *Macaronea* di Merlino. Nel 1552 a Venezia usciva a stampa la definitiva redazione del *Baldus* e della *macaronee* minori, detta “Vigaso Cocaio” (o “di Vigaso Cocaio”) dal nome dell'autore di una “lettera alli lettori” che fu stampata come prefazione all'opera. Fondamento del discorso di Luca Curti è il testo volgare di Vigaso Cocaio, in cui il rifacimento dell'*Innamorato* del Boiardo, che il Folengo aveva ormai condotto a compimento, non è soltanto annunciato ma descritto. Luca Curti pone come ipotesi che tale rifacimento sia quello di Ludovico Domenichi.

95. Franceschetti, Antonio. *Il Boiardo e l'avvio del “Furioso”*. In *Miscellanea di studi in Onore di Marco Pecoraro. Da Dante al Manzoni*. A c. di Bianca Maria Da Rif e Claudio Griggio. Firenze: Leo Olschki, 1991. Pp. 111-130.

Lo studioso ribadisce la necessità di un controllo e di una verifica del *Furioso* nei suoi rapporti con l'*Innamorato* per una comprensione più puntuale ed accurata dello spirito dell'opera, degli ideali del suo autore, dei suoi intenti e dei suoi propositi nella composizione del poema. Per chi voglia evitare di "perdersi" nel *Furioso*, il poema del Boiardo rappresenta il punto di partenza da cui è indispensabile muoversi: e nel campo degli studi di quello che costituisce uno dei capolavori del Rinascimento e di tutta la tradizione letteraria d'Italia, questo lavoro resta ancora quasi tutto da fare.

96. Mancini, Albert N. Recensione a: *Orlando Innamorato* by Matteo Maria Boiardo. Translated with an introduction and notes by Charles Stanley Ross. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. Pp. 891. "The Sixteenth Century Journal" 22 IV, 4 (1991): 835-838.

Recensione assolutamente positiva dell'opera del Ross. Mancini deplora soltanto la scarsità di annotazioni e la mancanza di riferimenti ad opere di critici italiani come Emilio Bigi, Remo Ceserani, Ferruccio Ulivi e Marco Praloran. Tuttavia il testo viene dichiarato fondamentale e degno di nota per lettori e pubblico anglofoni.

97. Ross, Charles. *False Fame in "Paradise Regained": The Siege of Albraca*. In Mario A. Di Cesare. *Milton in Italy Contexts Images Contradictions*. Binghamton: MRTS, 1991. Pp. 381-403.

Un riferimento all'*Innamorato* di Matteo Maria Boiardo si rinviene nel *Paradise Regained* di Milton quando la visione di Satana dei Parti e degli Sciti in guerra viene paragonata ad una battaglia inventata dal poeta italiano quattrocentesco. Nel passo citato dell'opera di Milton si parla di Agricane e di Albracca. Così, conclude Ross, la geografia favolosa di Boiardo che si situa nell'Asia centrale coincide con quella dei Parti di Satana.

98. Tartaro, Achille. *Sulle tracce dell'epos*. In *Lo spazio letterario di Roma antica*. A c. di G. Cavallo, F. Fedeli, A. Giardina. Vol. 4. *L'attualizzazione del testo*. Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1991. Pp. 213-214.

Dall'autore dei *Carmina* e dei *Pastoralia* ci aspetteremmo nell'*Innamorato* ben oltre una traccia della sua formazione umanistica. Al contrario, il prodotto maggiore del primo Rinascimento ferrarese resta tutto all'interno della letteratura romanza. Boiardo, sostiene Tartaro, è fermo nel rispetto dei confini. Scelta la sua strada, la percorre fino in fondo senza deviazioni. Da una parte l'epica classica e il latino, dall'altra le *ambages* dei cavalieri e il volgare. Muovendo di qui, al riparo da ogni tentazione di confronto con l'epica classica, Boiardo dà forma a un epos signorile e cortigiano.

99. Trovato, Paolo. *Con ogni diligenza corretto. La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470-1570)*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991. Pp. 410.

Tra la fine del 1553 ed i primi mesi del 1555 il Ruscelli, nel suo *Brieve discorso* che correda l'edizione del *Compendio* del Collenuccio, offre un primo inquadramento della situazione filologica-linguistica del tempo. Secondo Ruscelli al tempo del Collenuccio si usava una lingua mista cortigiana, più o meno vicino alla toscana, ma senza regole né ornamenti come quella usata nell'*Innamoramento de Orlando* di Boiardo e nelle sue storie d'Erodoto tradotte dal greco. Pur tuttavia c'erano esigenze linguistiche sentite dai contemporanei che erano abituati a testi corretti e regolati. Di qui, di conseguenza, viene messa in luce la funzione del "correttore" presso le case editrici del tempo. Paolo Trovato osserva che tra i testi di consumo, ampliati e contaminati continuamente, quello dell'*Innamorato* rifatto dal Domenichi è tra i più sfortunati. Nell'edizione Bonelli del 1576 il diciannovesimo canto del secondo libro inizia "con tre ottave berniane alle quali seguono nove della Riforma, un'altra berniana, poi un'altra del Domenichi e così via".

1992

100. Beer, Marina. Alcune osservazioni sulla novella nell'*Orlando innamorato*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 143-160.

Le novelle nell'*Innamorato* sono presentate dal narratore come illustrazione o esemplificazione di una massima o di un comportamento che ne rivela l'ascendenza nella tradizione novellistica. S'inseriscono sempre nella cornice romanzesca per caratterizzare un personaggio, oppure una situazione tra narratore e narratori.

101. Benvenuti, Antonia Tissoni. *Il terzo libro, ovvero "El fin del Innamoramento d'Orlando"*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 29-44.

Il terzo libro del poema presenta una configurazione filologica diversa e distinta dai primi due. Infatti accanto ai testimoni del poema completo si pone una stampa (Q) che contiene solo il terzo libro. La Benvenuti sostiene che Q rappresenta un testimone importante e noto ma sfortunato. Se ne ha la descrizione nella *Bibliografia* di Neil Harris.

102. Bruni, Francesco. *L'italiano nelle regioni. Lingua nazionale e identità regionali*. Torino: UTET, 1992.

Boiardo praticò tutti i gradi di scrittura: il latino umanistico e cancelleresco, il toscano letterario punteggiato ora di latino ora di volgare padano, il toscano delle scritture popolari, la lingua della conversazione e della poesia cortigiana fondata sulla *koiné* settentrionale. Il Boiardo visse anche il passaggio dall'epoca dei manoscritti a quella della stampa con le implicazioni relative all'adeguamento linguistico per platee più vaste degli uditori di corte. Il testo dell'*Innamorato* determinò per un cinquantennio il gusto poetico e linguistico di letterati e

stampatori non toscani: delle prime cinque edizioni (1483-1506) — varie migliaia di esemplari — sopravvivono in tutto quattro copie, il che dimostra l'intenso consumo del prodotto. La lingua del poema è una via di mezzo tra il cultismo delle liriche e la vernacularità delle lettere, con escursioni nell'uno e nell'altro settore a seconda di quanto la materia lo richiedesse. Boiardo perseguì un suo disegno di "umanesimo cavalleresco".

103. Brusciagli, Riccardo e Amedeo Quondam (a c. di). *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1992.

L'opera rappresenta gli atti del convegno, Giornate di studio 11-13 febbraio 1988, avvenuto presso l'Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali a Ferrara.

104. Carrai, Stefano. *Primi appunti sulle presenze pulciane nell'"Innamorato"*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 107-116.

Il Carrai presenta l'ipotesi di un Boiardo che lesse il poema di Pulci su un esemplare a stampa manoscritto, intorno al 1478, quando anche Ercole d'Este vi si appassionò. Boiardo lo riecheggì scrivendo di getto i primi due libri dell'*Innamorato* nell'arco di pochi anni (1478-82).

105. Casadei, Alberto. *I "Cinque canti" o l'ultima eredità di Boiardo*. "Italianistica" 21 (1992): 739-748.

I *Cinque canti* dell'Ariosto avrebbero dovuto costituire la continuazione del primo *Furioso* ma che essi "guardino indietro" è evidente fin dalle prime ottave in cui si registra un buon numero di riferimenti all'*Innamorato*: il solo menzionare le vicende di Alcina e Morgana, di Fallerina e Dragontina provoca l'impressione di un ritorno alla preistoria del poema ariostesco. L'autore Casadei pone l'ipotesi, a questo punto, che i *Cinque Canti* rappresentino l'inizio di una continuazione che avrebbe dovuto portare a termine l'opera boiardesca nell'atmosfera cupa della futura morte di Ruggiero.

106. Cottignoli, Alfredo. *Dietro le quinte dei "Rerum": Muratori fra Boiardo e Riccobaldo*. In *Per formare un'istoria intiera. Testimoni oculari, cronisti locali, custodi di memorie private nel progetto muratoriano. Atti della I giornata di studi muratoriani*. (Vignola, 23 marzo 1991.) Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1992. Pp. 63-72.

Secondo il Cottignoli l'*Istoria imperiale*, ossia il celebre volgarizzamento boiardesco del *Chronicon Imperatorum*, attribuito a Riccobaldo, sarebbe in realtà traduzione del Boiardo, nonostante i dubbi del Muratori.

107. Davies, Christopher Ph. D. University of Reading (United Kingdom). DAI (Dissertation Abstract Index). Title: "An Analysis of How Humor Is Created in Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*" 11990, pp. 456). Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 1992. 52:9, 2942A.

L'argomento di questa dissertazione è l'analisi dei processi letterari attraverso cui Boiardo crea effetti umoristici nell'*Innamorato* ed i vari tipi di comico. Basandoci su moderne teorie umoristiche di Koestler, Bergson e Freud, l'autore esamina il "buffone" Astolfo, l'"umiliato" Orlando e la relazione comico-umoristica di Rinaldo e Angelica.

108. Davies, Christopher. Recensione a: *Selections from Boiardo's "Orlando innamorato"*. By Mark Staebler. Preface by Paolo Valesio. *American University Studies, 2: Romance Languages and Literature*, 101. New York: Lang, 1989. Pp.xvii-466. "Modern Language Review" 87 (1992): 500-501.

Benché la recensione all'opera sia abbastanza favorevole, Davies ha tuttavia delle riserve per quanto riguarda la resa dell'ottava nella traduzione. Staebler non avrebbe rispettato l'ambiente storico del poema ed avrebbe talvolta usato espressioni anacronistiche devianti dal significato dato dal Boiardo.

109. Dorigatti, Marco. *Il boiardismo del primo "Furioso"*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 161-174.

Il primo *Furioso*, quello del 1516, resta il massimo omaggio reso al poeta scandinavo. Ariosto si rivela conscio del fatto che ai suoi lettori la materia dell'*Innamorato* debba essere altrettanto familiare. Basandosi sulla lettera indirizzata dall'Ariosto a Francesco Gonzaga (14 luglio 1512) Dorigatti sostiene che veramente Ariosto continuò l'invenzione (introduzione del personaggio Ruggiero) del Boiardo. L'eredità boiardesca e l'intento politico-encomiastico furono accolti e fedelmente adempiuti dall'Ariosto.

110. Ferraro, Bruno. Recensione a: Neil Harris. *Bibliografia dell'"Orlando innamorato"*. Volume secondo. Panini: Modena, 1991. In *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 54 (1992): 288-290.

In questo secondo volume Neil Harris raccoglie un gran numero di saggi sulle edizioni riportate nelle schede bibliografiche comprese nel primo volume. Questa bibliografia, dice Ferraro, si costituisce come strumento indispensabile per chi voglia soffermarsi sulle vicende tipografiche e le varie fasi di ricezione e di contraffazione del testo boiardesco. Il volume di Harris è corredato di varie appendici sui testimoni quattro e cinquecenteschi del Boiardo, sulle continuazioni all'*Innamorato*, su un numero di edizioni a cui fanno seguito ben sette utilissimi indici.

111. Limentani, Alberto. *L'"Entrée d'Espagne" e i signori d'Italia*. A c. di Marco Infurna e Francesco Zambon. Padova: Antenore, 1992. Pp. XXVII-400.

Negli ultimi anni della sua vita Alberto Limentani stava lavorando ad un progetto che ormai aveva assunto una fisionomia definitiva: quello di un libro dedicato all'*Entrée d'Espagne*, nel quale egli pensava di utilizzare i numerosi saggi già pubblicati sul poema franco-veneto integrandoli con nuove ricerche. La

lettura di quest'opera è utile al boiardista per certi riscontri trasversali con l'*Innamorato* di Boiardo.

112. Montagnani, Cristina. *Verso l'edizione dell'"Orlando innamorato": i testimoni più antichi dei primi due libri*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 45-54.

La Montagnani ed Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti hanno come scopo quello di esaminare in una nuova prospettiva i rapporti fra i più antichi testimoni dell'*Innamorato*. Infatti se la ricostruzione congetturale della perduta *princeps* del 1482-83 resterà affidata alla sola testimonianza veneziana del 1487, l'esame delle stampe cinquecentesche del poema varrà a gettare luce sulla postuma (e anch'essa perduta) edizione scandianese (1495) dell'opera nella sua forma integrale.

113. Montecchi, Giorgio. *La stampa a Scandiano alla fine del Quattrocento*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 9-28.

Per conoscere come il tipografo Pellegrino Pasquali progettò e produsse i libri scandianesi della fine del Quattrocento, basta analizzare gli esemplari delle sue edizioni giunte fino a noi e sopravvissute alle ingiurie del tempo: rimane la commedia di Matteo Maria Boiardo, il *Timone*, stampata nell'anno 1500.

114. Pettinelli, Rosanna Alhaique. *Lo scambio delle armi tra Amore e Morte: un tema ferrarese tra Quattro e Cinquecento*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1992. Pp. 85-93.

L'*Angelica innamorata* del ferrarese Vincenzo Brusantino risente di canoni inventivi e narrativi che, provenendo dal modello boiardesco, continuano a farsi presente, ancora in pieno Cinquecento, nel livello medio della grande produzione dei romanzi di cavalleria.

115. Pettinelli, Rosanna Alhaique. *Figure femminili nella tradizione cavalleresca tra Quattro e Cinquecento*. "Italianistica" 21 (1992): 727-738.

Solo con il Boiardo i personaggi femminili acquistano una fisionomia particolare, una presenza più fitta e variata nelle tipologie. In particolare egli ci offre una figura di donna tutta nuova, Angelica.

116. Praloran, Marco. *Il modello formale dell'entrelacement nell'"Orlando innamorato"*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 117-127.

L'*entrelacement* diventa per Boiardo una tecnica ricchissima ed artificiale che consente anticipi, ritardi, richiami nella linearità del racconto, col risultato di accentuare i valori emozionali che si appoggiano sui contenuti del racconto e sulla forma della narrazione. In modo simile a quanto ricorda Chastel per la prospettiva illusionistica del '400.

117. Quint, David. *La fortuna di Morgana: dal Boiardo al Marino*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 99-106.

Le imitazioni dell'episodio di Morgana, nella tradizione poetico-narrativa rinascimentale, costituiscono un capitolo di storia della recezione: nel loro insieme tali imitazioni forniscono una lettura coerente non solo dell'episodio, ma del poema intero dell'*Innamorato* del quale l'episodio è modello emblematico.

118. Sandal, Ennio. Boiardo e refrigerio. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 95-97.

Margherita Gonzaga, moglie di Giovan Battista Refrigerio, era sorella minore di Taddea che, nel 1479, era andata sposa al conte Matteo Maria Boiardo. Di qui si deduce l'importanza di una biografia boiardesca che metterebbe in luce punti oscuri e nascoste relazioni sociali.

119. Sangirardi, Giuseppe. *La presenza del "Decameron" nell'"Orlando furioso"*. "Rivista di letteratura italiana" 10, 1-2 (1992): 25-67.

Il saggio si riferisce al *Furioso*, ma è senza dubbio utilissimo per i riferimenti trasversali al poema epico boiardesco.

120. Spaggiari, William. *La "Romantic Poetry" di Antonio Panizzi e il ritorno al testo originale dell'"Innamorato"*. In *Tipografie Romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 63-74.

In Italia dovevano passare più di dieci anni perché ci si accorgesse della "riscoperta" del Panizzi attraverso la pessima edizione dell'*Innamorato* realizzata nel 1842 da Giuseppe Antonelli per cura dell'infaticabile Luigi Carrer, che dichiarava di rifarsi all'edizione Pasquali del 1495, ovviamente ridotta a "miglior lezione".

121. Weaver, Elissa. *I narratori del Rifacimento berniano*. In *Tipografie e romanzi in Val Padana fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1992. Pp. 55-62.

Le due riscritture dell'*Innamorato*, quella del Domenichi e del Berni, tendono a sdoppiare stilisticamente il narratore. Oltre a quello stilistico esiste un altro tipo di sdoppiamento, molto più distruttivo: il narratore del *Rifacimento*, nelle sue varie manifestazioni, esprime atteggiamenti diversi e contrastanti riguardo al soggetto ed all'*ethos* del poema.

1993

122. Balsamo, Luigi. *Annals of G. A. Scinzenzeler, Printer in Milan: A Supplement*. In *The Italian Book 1465-1800. Studies presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on his 70th Birthday*. Ed. Dennis

V. Reidy. London: The British Library, 1993. Pp. 65-87.

Tra gli annali di G. A. Scinzenzeler, stampatore a Milano, Luigi Balsamo dà notizia di una edizione dell'*Innamorato* del Boiardo del 1539, ristampata a Milano da Giovanni Antonio da Castiglione, probabile collaboratore di Scinzenzeler ed erede della bottega e del materiale tipografico.

123. Benvenuti, Antonia Tissoni. *Il mito di Ercole. Aspetti della ricezione dell'antico alla Corte Estense nel primo Quattrocento. In Omaggio a Gianfranco Folena. Padova: Editoriale Programma, 1993. Vol. I, pp. 773-792.*

La studiosa si occupa del mito di Ercole analizzando l'opera di Piero Andrea de' Bassi, *Le fatiche de Hercule*. Nel poema epico boiardesco compaiono a volte fatiche di Ercole travestite.

124. Cavallo, Jo Ann. *Boiardo's "Orlando innamorato": An Ethics of Desire*. Rutheford: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 1993. Pp. XI-206.

Benché Boiardo affermi il suo scopo di divertire e piacere nella stesura del poema, in realtà un attento esame dei modelli narrativi mostra, nel testo, una ben definita visione morale.

125. Di Tommaso, Andrea (a c. di). *"Amorum Libri". The Lyric Poems of Matteo Maria Boiardo*. Trans. with Introduction and Notes by Andrea Di Tommaso. Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies; Dovehouse Editions Inc., 1993. Pp. X-299.

Utilissima opera per far conoscere gli *Amorum Libri* di Boiardo agli studiosi ed ai lettori di lingua inglese ad americana. Il volume è corredato di un'ampia introduzione e di una buona bibliografia.

126. Foà. Simona. *I Tarocchi di Matteo Maria Boiardo Dalla Corte Estense alla tipografia veneziana. In Passare il tempo. La letteratura del gioco e dell'intrattenimento dal XII al XVI secolo. Atti del convegno di Pienza, 10-14 settembre 1991. Roma: Salerno, 1993, vol. 2, pp. 609-617.*

La Foà sostiene che l'ispirazione ad accompagnare con versi un mazzo di carte venne a Boiardo proprio dalla corte. Ma sarebbe, tuttavia, riduttivo stabilire un rapporto di causa-effetto fra l'ambiente all'interno del quale i Tarocchi vennero pensati, e a cui erano destinati, e il testo. Nel momento in cui la stampa se ne appropriò, per opera di Niccolò Zoppino, il testo dei Tarocchi viene decontestualizzato per essere meglio collocato all'interno di una precisa operazione editoriale. Nel corso del XVI secolo era possibile attribuire all'intero mazzo di carte da giuoco il significato di un mondo all'interno del quale trovavano posto tutte le qualità ed i difetti umani, un'enciclopedia allegorizzabile.

127. Franceschetti, Antonio. *Dall'"Innamorato" al "Furioso": letteratura cavalleresca e intrattenimento alla Corte di Ferrara. In*

Passare il tempo. La letteratura del gioco e dell'intrattenimento dal XII al XVI secolo. Atti del convegno di Pienza, 10-14 settembre 1991. Roma: Salerno, 1993. Vol. 2, pp. 189-218.

Lo studioso prende in esame le caratteristiche fondamentali che giochi, passatempi, intrattenimenti hanno nei poemi del Boiardo, del Cieco da Ferrara e dell'Ariosto, tre opere destinate prima di tutto al pubblico della corte estense. Franceschetti si sofferma sulla musica osservando che non è realistico pensare che il Boiardo, il Cieco e l'Ariosto non si rendessero conto della musicalità insita nell'ottava, pur sapendo di rivolgersi a un pubblico di lettori piuttosto che di ascoltatori. Se non ci sono dubbi sull'interesse e sull'amore del Boiardo anche per questo aspetto del suo poema come forma di intrattenimento, non ci sono riserve sull'importanza e sul rilievo attribuiti alla musica dal Cieco che, proprio per la sua menomazione fisica, si sofferma molto poco sui colori nel *Mambriano*. L'Ariosto, invece, come per tanti altri aspetti dell'esistenza, è incline a presentare due punti di vista opposti: quello che va bene in certi momenti non va più bene in altri.

128. Harris Neil. *Devant nous le déluge! Per una bibliografia boiardesca degli anni '90*. "Il Boiardo notiziario di informazione e di bibliografia boiardesca." Il centro stampa del comune di Scandiano. A c. di Giuseppe Anceschi. 1 (giugno 1993): 9-11; 2 (novembre 1993): 20.

Bibliografia boiardesca non ragionata degli anni '90.

129. Potter, Jeremy M. *Nicolò Zoppino and the Book Trade Network of Perugia. In The Italian Book 1465-1800. Studies presented to Dennis E. Rhodes on His 70th Birthday*. Ed. Dennis V. Reidy. London: The British Library, 1993. Pp. 152-53.

Potter segnala un'edizione del 1537 dell'*Apuleio volgare* tradotto da Matteo Maria Boiardo, stampato dallo Zoppino ma rivisto e corretto da Marchiore Pedastreo da Perosa, un contatto perugino.

130. Zampese, Cristina. *L'"Orlando innamorato" e Stazio*. "Giornale storico della letteratura italiana" 170, fasc. 551 (1993): 394-427.

La Zampese, analizzando l'*Innamorato*, rivela che la poesia del poema boiardesco nasce sul terreno di una tradizione letteraria anche classica, che è possibile riportare alla luce scavando intorno ad alcune spie tematiche e lessicali, lasciate ben visibili dal poeta, spesso per suggerire al lettore intendente un'interpretazione non superficiale di alcuni episodi, avvallata dal referente culto. Fra gli autori utilizzati nella composizione del poema un posto di rilievo spetta a Stazio della *Tebaide* e dell'incompiuta *Achilleide*. Ma per Boiardo, l'imitazione da Stazio non è se non elemento catalizzatore di una serie di variazioni che attingono comunque a qualche canale secondario di trasmissione dei materiali mitologici. Uno di essi è l'apparato delle glosse che corredevano i classici latini e l'altro è rappresentato dalle rielaborazioni romanze.

1994

131. Bregoli-Russo, Mauda. *Studi di critica boiardesca*. Napoli: Federico & Ardia, 1994.

Sono raccolti in questo libro con aggiornamento bibliografico otto saggi di critica boiardesca pubblicato dal 1980 al 1988. La Prefazione e l'Introduzione, che precedono i saggi, rappresentano la rilettura attuale di un discorso critico che si propone di sollevare questioni e problemi agli studiosi ed ai lettori di Boiardo.

132. Scarsella, Alessandro. *Su una lettera del Boiardo*. "Lettere italiane" 1 (gennaio-marzo 1994): 106-108.

Restituendo la missiva n. 35 (edizione del Mengaldo del 1962) a una lezione più corretta, lo Scarsella vede la necessità di una riedizione integrale delle lettere del Boiardo allo scopo di valorizzare il reperto linguistico di una *koiné* ancora molto malnota. La missiva n. 35 è indirizzata dal Boiardo al Comune di Scandiano il 25 agosto 1471.

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Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism: 1986-1993

Introduction

This bibliography of criticism is a continuation of a "Selected Bibliography of Ariosto Criticism, 1980-87," which appeared in a special issue of *MLN* devoted to studies on the *Orlando furioso* (Volume 103 [1988]: 187-203). Like the earlier bibliography, it attempts to cover critical studies on all of Ariosto's writings, although, not surprisingly, relatively limited critical attention has been given in the past several years to works other than the *Furioso*, the *rime* in particular.

One might have expected a waning of interest in Ariosto after the very active critical attention paid him during the period of the six-hundredth anniversary of his birth (1974) — critical attention which is extensively documented in Robert J. Rodini and Salvatore Di Maria, *Ludovico Ariosto: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1956-1980* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1984). But, as Jo Ann Cavallo has noted, since 1986, each year in the United States alone has produced a monographic study on Ariosto (Cavallo 129), attesting to the writer's significance in the minds of literary historians for the evolution of narrative forms. Attesting to the poet's continuing high visibility, Cavallo's *rassegna* considers the major monographic studies in English during the period 1986-1991, and other bibliographic essays in recent years, including those by Marina Beer, Alberto Casadei, Carlo Cordié, Antonio Franceschetti, and Dennis Looney. And the recently published exhibition volume, *Ludovico Ariosto: documenti, immagini, fortuna critica*, edited by Gino Badini (Ferrara, 1992) and with a useful bibliography on *Ariostea* (which is, however, dismayingly dependent on earlier published bibliographies, including their annotations), keeps alive Ariosto's fortunes through a useful listing of pertinent archival materials and other documents.

Cavallo has handily categorized the major studies in English of the past several years and has noted the areas of critical concern which are of major interest to writers in North America, especially: Ariosto and allegory; intertextuality; studies on the *Furioso's* characters; and Ariosto in a socio-historical context. At the same time she notes the relatively slight attention paid by these studies to the earlier romance tradition in Italy, an area of investigation which, as can be seen in the bibliography that follows, is still of vital interest in Italy with the work of Marina Beer and Maria Cabani, for example. However, it is interesting to note the relatively few major monographic studies on Ariosto by Italian scholars in recent years, at least when compared to North American

publications. And in perusing the bibliography which follows and then correlating it with many important scholarly contributions, one notes, also, that many important essays by French and German critics have not been given adequate attention, or, indeed, any attention at all.

Given the attention that Ariosto has received since the early '70s in particular, it is surprising that there has still not appeared, to my knowledge, a concordance of his writings, although a few helpful indexes and research tools have been published, including Maureen Buja's first-line index of poetry and David Robey's computer analysis of rhymes. And it is noteworthy that extended consideration of individual characters in the *Furioso* has begun to appear in the wake of Peter DeSa Wiggins' monograph, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the Orlando furioso* (1986), most notably Michael Sherberg's study on the evolution of Rinaldo. Not surprisingly, in the United States, especially, there has been considerable attention paid the *Furioso* in the context of both feminist and gender studies, including a recent monograph by Valeria Finucci, articles by Pamela Benson, Maggie Gunzberg (England), and Juliana Schiesari. Both Katherine Hoffman and Deanna Shemek, in a manuscript currently in preparation, have concerned themselves with Ariosto and the whole question of patronage, a subject of considerable interest recently and reflected in the volume edited by Marianne Pade, *La corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo, 1441-1598* (1990).

The use of the word "selected" in describing this bibliography is part of a strategy to make it amply clear that it, like all bibliographies, cannot pretend to completeness, most especially for items not included in standard international bibliographies. The span of time —1986-1993 — indicates that I have included items that should have appeared in the installment published in *MLN* but which were omitted; and one must assume that a number of items published in 1993 and which have not found their way into standard bibliographies have eluded my notice.

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ITALIAN BOOKSHELF

Edited by Dino S. Cervigni and Massimo Maggiari with the collaboration of Paolo Cherchi, Albert N. Mancini, Gustavo Costa, Valeria Finucci, and John P. Welle.

Alfredo Stussi. *Lingua, dialetto e letteratura*. Torino: Einaudi, 1993. Pp. 260.

When Alfredo Stussi printed his *Studi e documenti di storia della lingua e dei dialetti italiani* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), a reviewer, Claudio Marazzini, aptly remarked that in the volume Stussi had previously written on the same subject for Einaudi's *Storia d'Italia* ("Lingua, dialetto e letteratura," *Storia d'Italia*, 1, I caratteri originali, Torino: Einaudi, 1972, 679-728) the title of the synthesis had been "Lingua, dialetto e letteratura," because, being a historical abridgment, it was necessary to place philology in the second place. Marazzini continued observing that in the book he was now reviewing linguistics was given full billing and gave thanks to the author for having thus switched emphasis (Claudio Marazzini, review of Alfredo Stussi's *Studi e documenti*, *Giornale Storico della letteratura italiana* 161 [1984]: 466-470). It should be kept in mind that Stussi often edited in book form articles that had previously appeared in various scholarly journals. There is nothing wrong with collecting one's articles in a book and offering it to the scholarly world, as long as the bibliography is kept up to date and the chapters are integrated in a logical sequence. In the *Studi e documenti* volume, for instance, the study covered a wide span of time, reaching as recent a period as the second half of the nineteenth century, with essays on Salomone Morpurgo and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli; yet the articles complemented each other almost perfectly, because of the limited scope of the subject. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the present book, in which the articles on language, dialect, and literature vie with each other for the reader's interest, without reaching an integrated unity. Why a scholar of such impeccable credentials as Stussi (he is a full professor at the very prestigious Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and has been a contributor to scholarly journals since 1970) has agreed to publish so many disparate articles in a new book is a little puzzling, unless he has simply succumbed to Einaudi's blandishments.

The first chapter, "Lingua, dialetto e letteratura" (3-63) had appeared, as it has been mentioned, in the Einaudi *Storia d'Italia* (Stussi 1972). Do not attempt to read the discussion in the first few pages without first going back to your graduate school notes on the changes from Latin to Vulgar Latin and to Italian: it is highly technical. Since the essay in its present form has not improved upon the 1972 version, it would be much simpler to read it in the original. In spite of not having been brought up to date, the second part of the same chapter, entitled "Il plurilinguismo del tardo Cinquecento e del Seicento" (29-37), should be read and pondered upon, since it still remains one of the best explanations of the phenomenon written to this day.

The second chapter, "La letteratura in dialetto nel Veneto" (62-106), is much more up-to date, and has been concurrently presented for publication to *Atti del convegno su la letteratura dialettale preunitaria*, Palermo: Facoltà di lettere, 1993. It is a highly specialized essay, but should be of great interest to the researcher in the history of Renaissance theater, since the pages on Beolco (75-79) are filled with excellent scholarship, as are the pages devoted to Goldoni (86-92).

Chapter three, "Il mercante veneziano" (107-128), had appeared in *Cultura popolare nel Veneto. Arti e mestieri tradizionali*, Milano: Amilcare Pizzi, 1989. It encompasses the period intervening between the Gothic and Lombard hegemony and the end of the golden age for the Serenissima. It attempts to paint a picture of the ascendance and decline of the Venetian ruling class, and, in spite of the fact that Christian Bcc and Vittore Branca had already described the phenomenon in detail, Stussi gives an excellent bird's eye view of the topic.

Chapter four, "Scelte linguistiche e connotati regionali nella novella italiana" (129-153), had already appeared in *La novella italiana. Atti del convegno di Caprarola 19-24 settembre 1988*, Salerno: Edizioni Roma, 1989, I, 191-214. It is, as the author himself defines it, "una scorribanda su alcuni aspetti delle discussioni linguistiche cinquecentesche" (139) and shows the author's profound scholarly preparation and deep knowledge of Sixteenth-century literature. Of course, it is only of interest to the "addetto ai lavori" and, for the very reason of being "una scorribanda," it is rather rambling and easy to follow only for the most initiated specialist.

Chapter five, "Lingua e problema della lingua in Luigi Capuana" (154-183), has already appeared in *L'illusione della realtà. Atti del convegno di Montréal 16-18 marzo 1989*, Roma: Salerno, 1989, 11-41. It brings into light the linguistic compromise between Sicilian and Tuscan in the pen of Capuana, adduces many interesting examples and paints a clear picture of a writer who, throughout his life, was obsessed by the notion of not knowing well either the Italian grammar or Italian spelling (177).

Chapter six, "Grammatica della poesia: appunti sui versi tursitani di Pierro" (184-196), had appeared in *Il transito del vento: il mondo e la poesia di Albino Pierro*, Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche, 1989, 9-20, which in turn had already appeared in *Lingua e stile* 22 (1987), 295-305. Considering that Pierro has not yet reached international (not even national) proportions, and that the essay is highly technical, it is questionable why it was included in the volume. The same can be said of chapter seven "La letteratura romagnola: appunti filologici e linguistici" (197-213), that has been submitted to *La poesia dialettale romagnola del Novecento. Atti del Convegno di Sant'Arcangelo, 14-16 dicembre 1989*. It is of such limited scope, being a strictly linguistic study of poetry in the "romagnolo" dialect, that it can be of interest only to a handful of interested aficionados.

Chapter eight, "Filologia e storia della lingua italiana" (214-248), had appeared in *Yearbook of Italian Studies* 9 (1991), although the bibliography stops at 1988. In spite of the rather polemic tone, it is a lively discussion of the relationship between philology and linguistics and again shows the solid scholarly foundation of the author.

Chapter nine, "Ancora su linguistica e critica letteraria" (235-248), appeared in *Lezioni sul Novecento. Storia, teoria e analisi letteraria*, Milano: Vita e pensiero,

1990, 209-220. Why the essay is not accompanied by footnotes or by any scholarly apparatus is not explained, although there are quotations to Verlaine (244) and to Chomski (245) that would certainly necessitate elucidation. There is an index of authors (251-260). Why an index of works cited has not been included, placing upon the reader the burden of searching for bibliographical items, remains also a mystery.

Since many of the essays contained in the book have appeared in rather obscure Italian publications, in spite of the obvious bibliographical gaps, the volume should be perused by the specialist who wants to be brought up to date of the nooks and crannies discovered by Stussi. Even in the most abstruse linguistic discussions Stussi remains crystal clear, a feat not too common among modern Italian scholars.

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The Italian Collections Across the Centuries: Literature, Art, and Theatre. An Exhibition in Honor of the XIII Annual Meeting of the American Association for Italian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Selected and Described by Maria Xenia Zevelechi Wells with the Assistance of Katharine Harlow Tighe. The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin, vol. 23, 2/3. Pp. 179.

On the occasion of the XIII Annual Meeting of the American Association for Italian Studies that took place in Austin, the University of Texas resolved to honor the Association by exhibiting the Italian Collection preserved in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Library of the University of Texas at Austin.

The exhibition has been lovingly described by Maria X. Wells, Curator of Italian Collections, in a volume that is just as pleasurable to read as it is delightful to browse through. The Curator does not need an introduction: born and educated in Italy, prior to her present position she has been, for a number of years, a member of the faculty in the Italian Department of the University of Texas and has shown her interest in Italian manuscripts held in American libraries by editing, for the University of Texas, the collection of the Ranuzzi Manuscripts (Maria X. Wells, *The Ranuzzi Manuscripts*, Austin: The U of Texas, 1980) and by portraying Post-1600 Manuscripts and Family Archives in North-American Libraries for the Italian Publisher Longo (*Italian Post-1600 Manuscripts and Family Archives in North-American Libraries*, Ravenna: Longo, 1992).

As Paolo Biasin aptly remarks in the forward to the volume, the holdings of the Italian Collection are "a tangible and moving testimony of the historical development of Italian culture, from the first printed edition of the *Divine Comedy* to the manuscript of Carlo Levi's *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*" (9). The present volume also reflects the growing interest in interdisciplinary studies that is being exhibited in major universities, inasmuch as it presents a united view of the development of Italian literature, art, and theatre, through the centuries.

The manuscripts collection ranges from a 1363 manuscript of the *Divine Comedy*, to a collection of Petrarchan sonnets penned ca. 1450, to the manuscripts of the contemporary writers Volponi and Coccioli. In the incunabula collection, the

center is the proud owner of a Lactantius, printed in Subiaco by Pannartz and Schweinheim in 1465, of a *Divine Comedy*, printed in Foligno by Johann Neumeister and Evangelista Angelini, in 1472, and of a magnificent 1499 Aldine edition of Francesco Colonna *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Among the holdings of the Medici collection, there are another edition of Dante's *Commedia* with the annotations of Landino and Vellutello (Venice: Sessa, 1596) and a 1582 Giunti edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Noteworthy among the moderns are the papers of the symposium on James Joyce, held in Trieste in 1982, and some very interesting documents of Joyce's great friend, the "Triestino" Italo Svevo. Futurism is present in documents of Marinetti, Russolo, Balla, and Depero; the Ezra Pound collection is exhibited in documents of Ungaretti and in an edition of Dante's *Commedia* that Pound was reading in 1904. Finally, the almost complete history of *Botteghe Oscure* comes into view, with the reading of Marguerite Caetani's and Eugene Walter's correspondence.

The lover of the theatre will be delighted to find over 3,800 libretti in the Kraus Collection, among which Rinuccini's 1600 edition of *La Dafne* and Giuseppe Verdi's first edition of *Aida*. Moreover, the theater aficionado will delight in admiring Callots' 1622 etchings of *Balli di Sfessania* and Schenks famous scene from the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The Stanley Marcus Collection of Sicilian Marionettes and related books will kindle the interest not only of art lovers but also of anyone who will recognize in the Sicilian tradition of the Paladins of France the roots of the "Opera dei Pupi." Those who still vividly remember Federico Fellini's, Lina Wertmüller's, and Michelangelo Antonioni's films will be fascinated by just looking over the Eugene Walter Archive.

The historian and the political scientist will find ample material to ponder in the Gino Speranza Library of Books on Italo-American Relations and in the Arthur Livingston Archives. Finally, the art lover will find enormous pleasure in looking over the art collection, which contains also a great abundance of material of interest to the social historian.

Every item is accompanied by an ample account of the book's, document's, or drawing's history, and by an exhaustive description of how the Harry Ransom Research Center acquired the item under scrutiny. A supercilious critic might object to calling Tuoldus (37), a Norman, with the name of "troubadour," a definition normally reserved to Provençal poets — a very minor imperfection in an otherwise excellent volume that is lavishly illustrated. The cover is adorned by the figure of "Chout [a ballet by Prokofiev], il Buffone," by the noted artist Emanuele Luzzati, whose works were recently exhibited at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. "Lele," as his friends call him, would be proud of it.

This volume is a real godsend for department chairmen and dissertation supervisors, who will find in the Italian Harry Ransom Collection ample material to suggest to potential Ph.D. candidates.

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Tronzo, William, ed. *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen*. Washington: National Gallery of Art; Hanover, Distributed by the University Press of New England, 1994. Pp. 296 with illustrations.

It is entirely appropriate that the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, founded in 1979 as part of the National Gallery of Art, waited four years to publish the results of its 1990 symposium on Frederick II. For 1994 marks the eight-hundredth anniversary of the birth of this renowned Holy Roman Emperor.

This handsome volume, the twenty-fourth in the symposium series, *Studies in the History of Art*, will be of special interest to Italianists in general and to medievalists in particular. *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen* comprises fifteen essays in Italian, German and English by distinguished scholars of history and art history from Europe and the United States. The Italian contributors are Carla Ghisalberti of the University of Rome "La Sapienza"; Piero Morpurgo, who teaches history and Italian literature in Vicenza; Massimo Oldoni, professor of medieval Latin literature and head of the department of philology and medieval history at the University of Salerno; Giulia Orofino, a historian now engaged in editing the corpus of miniatures of the high Middle Ages at Montecassino; Valentino Pace, a member of the Dipartimento di studi sulle società e le culture del Medioevo at the University of Rome "La Sapienza"; and Antonio Thiery, a medievalist and cultural historian who is also an executive of RAI.

In his introduction, William Tronzo indicates that the essays in the present volume "take the intellectual life of Frederick's reign as their point of departure" (11). The working definition of "intellectual life" is a broad one, including not only science, philosophy, and the *ars dictaminis*, but also sculpture, architecture, manuscript production, economics and social attitudes. This more inclusive approach reflects a change in historical methodology.

One result of this change in approach is that recent research into Frederick and his sphere of influence has sought to present a more balanced, objective view of the emperor. This perspective stands in sharp contrast to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century research on Frederick, dominated by German scholars — Jakob Burckhardt, Edward Winkelman, Karl Hampe, Hans Niese and Ernst Kantorowicz were important contributors — which tended to glorify and idealize this ruler and hence to produce what Tronzo refers to as "a kind of crisis of overevaluation" (12). Today, scholars such as those whose studies we find in this volume are seriously reassessing Frederick's place in history. As Tronzo observes, this reassessment reflects two recent intellectual developments. The first, which specifically concerns Frederick, is the reevaluation, sometimes in a very elementary manner, of the primary evidence of Frederician culture and intellectual life, including artifacts such as treaties, letters, illuminations, sculpture and buildings. For example, in his essay on "Literary Activities of the Imperial and Papal Chanceries during the Struggle between Frederick II and the Papacy," Peter Herde questions whether extant epistles were actually used in diplomatic communications or whether they merely served as sophisticated writing exercises. In an analogous fashion, Willibald Sauerländer and Valentino Pace argue that Frederick may not have been so intimately involved in the production of art works and architecture as has been generally thought.

The second development that has influenced recent Frederician studies has to do with changing approaches to the study of history. As a result of the studies initiated by the *Annales* school and others, some historians now tend to integrate the role of the individual into the matrix of larger social, economic and cultural forces. In this regard, the essays of David Abulafia and James Powell are illuminating. Abulafia, in reevaluating Frederick's relation with the Jews and Muslims of his Sicilian kingdom, concludes that Frederick was much less tolerant of religious and ethnic diversity than historians have previously believed and that his policies toward these two groups were motivated by practical and self-interested considerations. Powell comes to similar conclusions regarding Frederick's economic policies, which he views as often exploitative of his subjects. Powell's interpretation counters the widely accepted notion that this emperor was an economic innovator.

Although none of the essays in this book directly explores the topic of greatest interest to Italianists (i.e., the poetry of the *scuola siciliana*), *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen* is nevertheless an invaluable tool for the student of early Italian literature. For it is only through a less ideological and more nuanced understanding of the cultural and intellectual underpinnings of Frederick's Sicilian court and realm that we can fully appreciate the significance of the contribution of the *scuola siciliana* to the world of Italian letters.

At this point, I think it is important to mention a few other recent conferences and publications on Frederick and his reign that are important because they have influenced the way in which we view this emperor. Beginning in 1989, the International Seminar on Frederick II took place at the Ettore Majorana Center for Scientific Culture in Erice, Sicily. This *convegno* explored three facets of Frederick's time: "Theory and Practice of Government," "Culture and Knowledge at the Time of Frederick" and "Frederick II and the Italian Cities." Two recent publications worthy of note are David Abulafia's eminently readable biography, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London: A. Lane, the Penguin Press, 1988) and *Politica e cultura nell'Italia di Federico II* (Pisa: 1986), edited by Sergio Gensini, the first volume of the *Collana di studi e ricerche* of the Centro di Studi sulla Civiltà del Tardo Medioevo, San Miniato (Pisa).

Since the essays in *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen* are well researched and copiously annotated, this volume richly satisfies its conceived purpose "to stimulate further study" (9). Published under the auspices of the National Gallery of Art, it is, not surprisingly, a sumptuous book. With a page size of nine by eleven inches, this volume is generously embellished by two-hundred fourteen black and white illustrations of varying sizes depicting the architecture, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts and other artifacts pertaining to Frederick's realms. In addition, the volume contains five color prints of extremely fine quality, two of which are reproduced as jacket illustrations.

Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen is required reading for those studying the art, culture and society of the northern and southern realms of the Hohenstaufen empire. It is also highly recommendable for those scholars of medieval literature who wish more fully to understand the cultural and intellectual setting within which Italian lyric poetry had its beginnings.

Amilcare A. Iannucci, ed. *Dante e la "bella scola" della poesia: autorità e sfida poetica*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1993. Pp. 358.

This collection of essays, among other things, signals to American scholars of Dante (and medievalists and Renaissance scholars as well) the fruitfulness of a strongly philological approach to the study of allusion. Refined by modern reception theory, this approach advances the interpretation of difficult allusive passages in Dante's works without the pretension of positivist interpretative closure. The chief goal of the nine essays that compose this challenging and rewarding book is the exploration of the ideological filter through which Dante read and misread the classical *auctores*. Through citation of medieval glosses, commentaries, and biographies the preeminent scholars gathered here seek to uncover the ways in which the ancients were read and to come to a further understanding not only of Dante's relation to the classical writers but also to his own Christian culture and its particular way of reading. The classical authors treated include Homer, Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Lucan, Statius, and Terence. Each contributor has provided a generous bibliography as well as ample notes, adding to the book's substantial value. All of the essays are written in Italian and the abundant citations from Latin texts and commentaries are left untranslated.

Many of the essays indicate the originality and force of Dante's poetic vision after a careful scrutiny of the ways in which Dante often falls in line with standard exegeses advanced by commentators. Sensitivity to the power of Dante's conviction for the need of a redefinition of "comedy" is the basis of Claudia Villa's essay on Dante's reading of Horace and Zygmunt Baranski's study on Dante's relation to the Roman comic tradition. Villa devotes a large portion of her essay, which entails a great deal of citation from Latin glosses, toward establishing the traditional way of reading Horace as dogmatic and prescriptive against which Dante's reading of the *auctor* is set. Dante, Villa concludes, "uses" a passage in the *Ars Poetica* to justify his rather radical redefinition of "comedy" in the *Commedia*. Yet Villa is careful not to suggest that Dante's ideas have no precedent; rather, she hypothesizes that Dante found justification of his vision also in the one definition of comedy found in the *Vita Bruniana di Terenzio*. Central to Baranski's discussion is the relative absence in the *Divine Comedy* of the most canonical of comic poets in the medieval era, Terence. After a detailed look at the three places in Dante's works in which Terence is evoked, Baranski decides that even though Dante's direct knowledge of Terence's work is doubtful, Dante is involved in a kind of *sfida* against the traditional classification of genres, specifically against that of comedy that Terence then represented. Yet the aspect of the *sfida* is mitigated by Dante's self-conscious advancement beyond the limited vision of Terence. No real contest can take place; so Terence, in effect, is left out of the *Commedia*, and Dante himself becomes the new *exemplum* of comedy.

Dante also gives us reason to believe that the nature of his *sfida* of the classical writers has as its basis his Christian vision. Dante's belief that his poem completes and fulfills pagan suggestions of truth is explored in Amilcare Iannucci's and Michelangelo Picone's essays. Confronting the difficult question of the meaning of Dante's self-inclusion in the circle of poets in Limbo, Iannucci concludes that Dante's deference to the ancients should not be confused with humanism, pointing out that while humanism implies a sense of a break from and effort to recover

classical art, Dante's inclusion in the circle shows that the poet does not believe that a break has occurred. He is, rather, their fulfillment. Reading them through the filter of his Christianity, Dante sees his relation to the ancients as anagogical. Iannucci writes: "Il suo poema completerà e sorpasserà i loro, soprattutto nel contenuto, guidato come esso è dato da una trazione anagogica. In definitiva, Dante deriva, o così egli protesta, la sua autorità — ideologica e poetica — direttamente da Dio" (29). Picone sets Dante in relation to classical *auctores*, primarily Ovid, and concludes that Dante basically surpasses all of them because of the force of the vision that he derives from his Christian faith. Toward the end of the article, he adduces several specific places in the *Commedia* that recall the *Metamorphoses*, succeeding in showing through close analysis of the specific language of the poems the basic differences between the two poets. Throughout these analyses, too, the superiority of Dante's Christian paradigm of authority is stressed.

The remaining essays, excluding the compilation of references to Virgil given by Hollander, are careful considerations of often problematic aspects of Dante's texts. They are exemplary philological studies that attempt to reconstruct the complex ways in which commentaries and glosses affect reading and the literary tradition itself. Gian Carlo Alessio and Claudia Villa's collaborative essay suggests that the facts of Virgil's life as given in *Inferno* 1.67-87 are ordered in such a way as to imitate a medieval introduction to an edition to Virgil that typically contained biographical imitation. The influential glosses on Virgil's text Alessio and Villa cite also help to explain certain small but revealing "moves" in Dante's text, such as why Dante presents Cacus as a centaur when Virgil's text says only "semihominis." The heavy use of parenthetical comments, though sometimes ponderous, are generally useful as references. In his essay on Homer, Giorgio Brugnoli, after a very useful demonstration of the non-Homeric sources for Dante's references to the characters from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, takes up the question of the identification of the unnamed voice of *Inferno* 4, who greets Virgil, thus leading to a discussion of the status of Homer against that of Virgil in Dante's text. Two of the important issues that Violetta de Angelis confronts in her essay on Dante and Lucan are the status of Cato and the meaning of Dante's enigmatic need to call upon the second *giogo* of Parnasus at the opening of the *Paradiso*. She addresses these issues only after assiduously exploring Dante's participation in and distance from his culture and the conditioned ways of reading Lucan. De Angelis looks at the commentaries on Lucan, examining how the glosses change the meaning of the text. More profound and impressive is her presentation of the ways in which commentaries condition the way both poets and commentators of later periods actually read. Dante was not immune to such an influence, yet his relation to the ancients, de Angelis suggests, was not determined by it either. Luca Carlo Rossi's essay advances our understanding of several aspects of Dante's characterization of Statius in the *Commedia*, among the most important of which is the poet's inclusion of Statius within the *cornice* of the prodigal and Statius's averred conversion to Christianity — aspects that have spurred much controversy and debate. Although Rossi admits that no presently known material written before Dante can be adduced to verify Dante's view of Statius, he holds that, by looking at the research on the commentaries on Statius, the view of Statius as Christian arises from mediating glosses and not merely from Dante's fantasy.

Using an extensive bibliography of modern commentators on the *Commedia*, Robert Hollander expands greatly upon Edward Moore's list of possible references to Virgil's works in Dante's *Commedia*, from one hundred and forty to around four hundred. The list, largely dependent on Hollander's sensibility, is conceived of as a preliminary study, subject to revision by the judgment of other scholars. The list alone gives hints into Dante's relation to Virgil, for it reveals that nearly twenty percent of the suggested allusions to Virgil occur in the first twentieth of the poem. In the first 707 verses Virgil is even more present than the Bible.

Hollander has classified each allusion as "certain," "probable," and "possible," A, B, and C, respectively. For Hollander the third group is the most problematic and suggestive, and he hopes that the pairings there will stimulate future study. There is a fourth category of about thirty citations, which Hollander sees as interesting even if dubious. Excluded from the list are obvious references in the *Commedia* to characters and names of places from Virgil's works. Hollander's compilation is first given in tabular form, so that one can easily compare the number of references in each canto through all three canticles. A careful look at this chart shows that of the three hundred and sixty-four allusions of types A, B, and C, two hundred and forty-one of these are of the type C, those least certain and most speculative concerning Virgilian echoes. This fact alone indicates the evocative nature of Hollander's work, which is as much an exercise in imagination as organization. Within ninety pages Hollander moves patiently line by line through the *Commedia*, beginning with the *Inferno*. The relevant excerpt from Dante's text is coupled with the corresponding Virgilian text. Each group is classified. In reading through the pairings, one becomes aware that Hollander has succeeded in providing a useful index of interpretive possibilities. This thoughtful and generous compilation is a fitting endpoint for this worthwhile book, which should be a stimulus to technical and interpretive advancement in Dante studies.

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Teodolinda Barolini. *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992. Pp. 348.

In her first chapter Barolini surveys critical treatment of the questions which her exhilarating book will examine, and they are vital ones: how are we to read Dante's claims of the *Commedia*'s truth-value, and does he believe in them himself? In Barolini's review of twentieth-century Dante criticism, critics of every stripe have climbed onto the chessboard which Dante has constructed for them and have limited their maneuvers to its surface, mistaking it for the world. Bowing to the *Commedia*'s internal rules, *dantisti* have foundered on non-questions: Is the *Commedia* allegory or poetry? Is its content a revelation or a fiction? Is Dante himself "the recorder of a genuine mystical experience (a 'visionary')?" or "a writer of realistic narrative (a 'poet')?" (145). Barolini pans back from the false oppositions with which Dante has beguiled us, and examines their mechanisms using a newly formalist, detheologizing reading strategy: "Detheologizing is not antitheological; it is not a call to abandon

theology or to excise theological concerns from Dante criticism. Rather, detheologizing is a way of reading that attempts to break out of the hermeneutic guidelines that Dante has structured into his poem, hermeneutic guidelines that result in theologized readings whose outcomes have been overdetermined by the author. Detheologizing, in other words, signifies releasing our reading of the *Commedia* from the author's grip, finding a way out of Dante's hall of mirrors" (17). For Barolini, Dante both believes himself to be a prophet, *and* takes poetry (rhetoric, eloquence, metaphor) as his vehicle of representation; there is no logical incompatibility between the two.

Barolini's Dante is no Wizard of Oz, a small man stage-managing smoke and thunder from behind a curtain, but rather a giant whose genius we cannot fully value until we realize how shrewdly he has stage-managed us. She reveals this by privileging form, not over or against content, but as a lens through which to reexamine content. Barolini's concern is to reveal the laws of Dante's three realms, which he has presented as "moral, theological, eschatological" laws, to be writerly, textual, narrative ones — "less God's laws than his own" (98). Her formalism entails a focus on, for example, lexical repetitions as signposts and shorthands for earlier narrative episodes; on the mechanics of transition between cantos, realms, terraces, modes of vision, and others; on the multiple, stuttering beginnings of the text (in *Inferno* I-VII) and on its staggered conclusion (in *Paradiso* XXII-XXXIII). She examines the lexicon and ethos of alternative modes of vision in the *Purgatorio* to argue that the entire poem does indeed recount a mystical experience, a "true and prophetic vision . . . seen in a waking sleep" (145). Through a careful attention to formal features she reveals how in *Paradiso* the poet alternates between unity and multiplicity, identity and difference, universality and historicity, eternity and time.

The book devotes three chapters each to *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, essentially following the poem's chronology as it unfolds in the time of writing and of reading. Barolini early sets out *Inferno*'s construction of the poetics of the new, a mode of narrative exposition which will govern the entire poem as the pilgrim meets "le vite spirituali ad una ad una" (*Par.* 33:24). The poet remembers and recounts the new planets that swam into the pilgrim's ken as he journeyed, until the moment at which his vision merges with the divine; all things, times, persons, places become co-present, all "cose nove" evaporate, and with them the poem. This sequential poetics works naturally in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* the poet creates, but will have to be grafted onto the unitary *Paradiso* through the pretext that the souls "choose" to reveal themselves in the single heavens instead of in the Empyrean. Whereas the poem needs this extension in time and space in order not to wink out in an epiphanic moment, Dante, typically, disguises this narrative imperative as a theological one, a function of the pilgrim's epistemological insufficiency.

In general, Barolini's practice is to juxtapose and foreground the *Commedia*'s metanarrative moments, when the poet reflects on the limitations and possibilities of language, the imperatives of his poem, and the intersection of perception and representation in writing it. She offers brilliant extended readings of *Purgatorio* X-XII, *Inferno* XVI and XVII, *Paradiso* X-XIV, and others. One high point is her reading of the Geryon episode as the archetype of what will become a regular strategy in other *cantiche*: the very implausibility of the poet's claims paradoxically becomes an authenticating device to convince the reader of their truthfulness. She also offers a

magisterial reading of Ulysses as a "lightning-rod" for the poet himself — a recurring icon of excess and trespass which the poet invokes in order to discredit it, differentiating himself from Ulysses by claiming that his own voyage is authorized and true. Barolini tracks how Dante reinvokes this icon via lexicon, proxy and rhyme in *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, noting its (again, paradoxical) effectiveness in shoring up the poet's own veracity, sincerity and humility.

Unavoidably, Barolini's presentation of Dante's project shares one feature with the self-limiting criticism she deprecates. If earlier Dante critics wanted to avoid the disquieting proposition that Dante *believed* in what he was communicating, her decision that in fact he did believe it, likewise cuts her off from certain questions. Her conviction that Dante exposes language as a flawed vehicle of veracious communication, keeps her from truly exploring the alternative: what if Dante doesn't believe? What if he knows his invention to be sinful, arrogant, transgressive, *unauthorized*? She takes issue with the proponents of a disingenuous Dante, but gives no explicit breakdown of what is at stake in positing the poet as a believer rather than a cynic. While she poses the question, "Does Dante read God correctly, as he claims, or does he read like Clement, composing a text whose *vocaboli* are *vani*?" (115), she does not really entertain, let alone explore, the latter possibility.

Barolini's documentation, thorough and concise, offers rich insights into and information on Dante studies as a whole, both Anglo-American and Italian. I occasionally wondered whether she has ever read a book of recent Dante criticism which she thoroughly enjoyed; and she rather too often opens a chapter reminding her readers that "Dante exegesis focus[es] as usual on what Dante says at the expense of what he does" (122). On the whole however her reading is so compelling, so exciting, that I was bound to agree with her assessment of the criticism which had missed the evidence she marshals so powerfully. She is a clear, elegant, deft and subtle writer, and this book confirms her stature as a preeminent American dantist. *The Undivine Comedy* should and will be tremendously influential in the field of Dante studies; moreover, its basis premise — that we should step back from an author's claims, and scrutinize his or her practice — is a good lesson for other periods and national literatures as well.

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Angelo Mazzocco. *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists: Studies of Language and Intellectual History in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993. Pp. 270.

This study examines two important stages in the development of Italian theories about language, specifically about the relationship between Latin and the modern vernacular. In the early Trecento, Dante offered his views of the subject in his Latin *De vulgari eloquentia* and his Italian *Commedia*. In the Quattrocento, several renowned humanists engaged in a debate on language which, in Mazzocco's view, was partly fueled by Dante's theories. Mazzocco has designed his book as an extended *hysteron-proteron*: he analyzes Dante's theories in Chapters 8-9 after discussing the

humanist debate in Chapters 1-7. Three appendices examine specific problems in the writings of Dante and modern scholars.

Mazzocco's Chapter One recounts the celebrated debate of 1435 as recorded in extant documents. While the papal Curia was in Florence, Leonardo Bruni (then chancellor of the Commune and a former papal secretary) took issue with Flavio Biondo concerning the nature of the Latin language in antiquity. Bruni asserted that in ancient Rome, as in contemporary Italy, two languages coexisted and competed. Educated patricians acquired literary Latin, while commoners used a vernacular tongue which was something like present-day Italian, if not its actual forerunner. Biondo countered that there was no evidence for more than one Latin tongue in antiquity; rather, the Romance vernaculars arose later from the linguistic contamination of Latin by the Lombards and other invading peoples.

Bruni's improbable theory of Roman bilingualism won few adherents. Mazzocco seeks to explain its origins in Florentine cultural patriotism, outlining Dante's linguistic theories in Chapter Two, and taking up Bruni's defense in Chapter Three. Here and throughout his book, Mazzocco demonstrates his allegiance (occasionally tempered) to Hans Baron, whose notion of patriotic humanism posits the intellectual descent of Bruni from Dante's exaltation of the vernacular. Yet even in the case of the exemplary Bruni, the Baronian thesis is not without contradictions. Thus, Bruni embraced Dante's notion of ancient bilingualism to give the Florentine vernacular a classical pedigree, but "he limits the vernacular to poetic writing" (36). Later in Chapter Seven, we read that while "the controversy between the vernacular school and Latin humanism was resolved by Bruni" (88), he nonetheless "uses the vernacular sparingly, limiting it to trifling matters" (90).

Having unfurled his *gonfalone*, Mazzocco proceeds to evaluate other humanists according to their sympathy or hostility to the "Florentine" cause. Chapter Four traces the origins of "Romance philology" in Flavio Biondo's notion of that barbarian invasions destroyed Rome's linguistic hegemony together with her political empire. Rather than associate this view with Valla's celebrated prefaces to his *Elegantiae*, Mazzocco here derives it from Dante, although in Chapter Nine he shows the poet's notions of linguistic mutability to be Babelic and theological.

Chapter Five examines the subsequent role played in the "Florentine debate" by three notable humanists, all of whom sided with Biondo. In an epistle of 1449 to Leonello d'Este, Guarino of Verona relies on Isidore of Seville in tracing four stages in the development of ancient Latin. In his *Disceptatio convivialis III* of 1449-50, Poggio Bracciolini argues against the existence of two kinds of Latin by adducing passages from Quintilian which were to provoke Lorenzo Valla's *Apologus II*, discussed in Mazzocco's next chapter. In epistles of 1451 to Lorenzo de' Medici, and of 1473 to Francesco Sforza, Francesco Filelfo follows his two predecessors in asserting the linguistic unity of ancient Latin, but formulates his own socio-linguistic theory which distinguishes between the *litteratura* of the educated classes and the *Latinitas* of the people.

Chapter Six, "The Florentine Debate and the Unique Position of Lorenzo Valla," attempts to isolate the Roman humanist through a polemical reading of his anti-Poggio invective *Apologus II*. Valla is dismissed as a malevolent scholar whose observations on classical Latin stem "not so much from a genuine interest in the linguistic state of antiquity, but from a need to vilify Poggio's personal life and

scholarship" (70). In a similar spirit, Mazzocco calls the insights in Valla's *Apologus II* "downright sophistic and ludicrous" (77), and rules that the work "cannot be considered a fundamental contribution to the Florentine debate" (78).

Chapter Seven turns to Leon Battista Alberti, who appears as a patriotic disciple of Dante and Bruni, and thus as a welcome antidote to Valla's "anti-Florentine" invective. Mazzocco asserts that Leon Battista naturally shared the adulation accorded to Dante in the *Paradiso degli Alberti*, a late-Trecento text central to Baron's patriotic thesis. Alberti's works in fact offer little evidence for a pro-Florentine adoption of a Dante cult, and Mazzocco rounds out his chapter with a section on Cristoforo Landino, a more genuinely patriotic Florentine who was not averse to reworking Alberti's image when it served his purposes.

Chapter Eight addresses the question of Dante's "noble vernacular," and offers a useful review of Italian scholarly literature on the question. (To Mazzocco's bibliography, one may now add Marianne Shapiro's 1990 *"De vulgari eloquentia": Dante's Books of Exile.*) But in this trilingual context — an English discussion of a Latin discourse on Italian — Mazzocco's argument is not always easy to follow. Many Latin terms are left untranslated, and the chapter offers numerous sentences like the following: "Italians lack a *curialitas* because they lack a *curia*, and they lack a *curia* because they lack a prince who renders the *curia* possible" (135).

Chapter Nine examines Dante's notions of Adamic language, and provides some useful review of linguistic theories of the Duecento, building on previous scholarship. As noted above, Mazzocco's observations here underscore the vast distance between Dante's theological views and the historicity of Quattrocento humanists like Biondo.

Mazzocco's three appendixes examine further issues related to his theme. Appendix One offers two pages on the distinction between "Latina lingua" and "grammatica," and Appendix Two three pages on the dolce stil novo. By contrast, Appendix Three offers an extensive critique of Mirko Tavoni's 1984 *Latino, grammatica, volgare*. While praising and borrowing Tavoni's critical edition of the primary sources, Mazzocco finds his reading of them laden with misconceptions and misinterpretations.

Mazzocco's book is decidedly conservative in outlook, and often petulant in tone. It was apparently inspired by Hans Baron's 1955 *Crisis*, and revised (reluctantly, it would seem) after the appearance of Tavoni's detailed and documented study. Following Baron, Mazzocco draws up clear battle lines, according to which Dante, Bruni, and Alberti are praised as patriotic spokesmen for the Florentine vernacular. Outsiders do not fare so well. Excluded from the fold, both Valla and Tavoni are "downright sophistic" (77, 199) and fail to make any important contribution. In his 1990 *Umanesimo e secolarizzazione*, Riccardo Fubini provides a more balanced critique of Tavoni, which Mazzocco briefly cites (261n30) as a confirmation of his own views. In fact, Fubini's objections to Tavoni stress two tendencies: the association of humanist views with the medieval grammatical tradition (including Dante), and the arbitrary division of the humanists into two warring camps. Thus, the humanist debate continues today, plagued by ideological polarities which obscure the truth.

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Francesco di Matteo Castellani. *Ricordanze: I: Ricordanze A (1436-1459)*. Ed. Giovanni Cappelli. Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento. Studi e Testi, n. XXVIII. Firenze: Olschki, 1992. Pp. 213.

La rivalutazione di testi medievali o rinascimentali fin qui dimenticati, trascurati, o rapidamente giudicati di poco interesse, continua con successo in Italia. Ricordanze, libri di conti, epistolari, memorie di viaggiatori costituiscono un intrecciarsi di testimonianze private che permettono di cogliere un quadro sempre più completo, una visione "a tutto tondo" della realtà di un'epoca e di una società. È, questo, l'aspetto filologico di un processo interdisciplinare che implica una collaborazione strettissima tra studiosi per raggiungere conclusioni nuove e finora magari impensate, con vantaggio delle singole discipline interessate. Gli studi storici più recenti cercano infatti di operare su una visione delle vicende e degli individui del passato più completa di quella tramandataci dalla tradizione degli ultimi secoli. Preoccupati di darci il resoconto delle vicende che interessavano l'*élite* dominante, politica ed intellettuale, troppo spesso gli storici ci hanno lasciato all'oscuro sulla vita reale della maggioranza silenziosa che componeva la città e la regione di cui si occupavano. La scuola degli *Annales* e gli studi di Fernand Braudel, di Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie e di Françoise Loux in Francia hanno trovato in Italia un ambiente preparatissimo. Basti pensare ai saggi di Piero Camporesi e di Carlo Ginzburg, basati su testi ormai dimenticati e tutti da riscoprire.

E veniamo a queste *Ricordanze*, un manoscritto appunto di questo tipo: semidimenticato e certamente rivalutabile. L'aveva utilizzato, all'inizio del secolo, lo storico Carlo Carnesecchi, ma solo per trarne, secondo la tendenza dell'epoca, poche "perle" aneddotiche per un paio di saggi. Si tratta, però, di un lungo filmato quotidiano, protrattosi per una dozzina d'anni, fatto di piccole cose, di notazioni dall'apparenza banale, ma ricche di interesse per chi sa spingersi "oltre il velame" dell'ovvio. E Giovanni Campielli, il curatore di questa edizione, ci fornisce, nell'introduzione e nelle note, i mezzi per fare un po' la storia delle "strutture del quotidiano" (per dirla con Braudel) di Francesco di Matteo Castellani. I Castellani, una tra le più importanti famiglie della fine del Trecento fiorentino, sono già noti per la loro partecipazione al "reggimento" della città, per i vincoli matrimoniali che li legano ad altri potenti casati, per il patrimonio imponente di cui godono; un patrimonio, però, che a quest'epoca già dà segni di frammentamento. Senza, tuttavia, entrare nei particolari biografici di Matteo Castellani e del figlio Francesco, minuziosamente ricostruiti da Campielli in una introduzione precisa e documentatissima, mi interessa qui sottolineare i particolari di questo "quotidiano" che vengono evidenziati nel dettato scarno e dall'apparenza banalissima di questo testo. Dettagli della vita personale e sessuale dello scrittore, la cui moglie, Ginevra, andatagli in sposa a tredici anni, muore a ventuno senza avergli dato figli, nonostante l'abbia mandata per un mese ai Bagni di Petriolo, rinomati per le loro capacità terapeutiche per la sterilità femminile. Questioni di dote, figli naturali dati a balia "fuor della porta a San Gallo", secondo matrimonio, epidemia di peste e abbandono della città per la frescura salubre di Incisa Valdarno, faide familiari per questioni d'interessi, divisioni di proprietà, nascite di figli legittimi (purtroppo senza avere per lunghi anni il tanto desiderato erede maschio!), problemi politici con il partito di Cosimo de' Medici che costringeranno i Castellani al confino e alla perdita del diritto di accedere alle cariche

pubbliche, multe pesanti e sequestri giudiziari. La vita di Francesco Castellani si chiude nel 1494, all'inizio della repubblica savonaroliana: sarà tumulato nella cappella di famiglia in Santa Croce.

Quando Castellani inizia a tenere questo libro, a vergare il testo di queste *Ricordanze*, ha poco più di diciott'anni, e la storia economica della sua vita comincia proprio con un intervento da parte del Comune di Firenze per riscuotere delle tasse, perché questo libro di *Ricordanze* non è un diario vero e proprio, ma uno dei libri paralleli di contabilità che tenevano regolarmente i fiorentini più abbienti.

Oltre alle vicende personali della biografia di Francesco, mi piace sottolineare ciò che a mio avviso rappresenta il particolare visuale, quello che nelle riproduzioni moderne dei quadri dell'epoca ha l'onore di un ingrandimento che ne favorisce l'apprezzamento, soprattutto da parte dei non addetti ai lavori. Tra le spese per i tessuti e gli abiti trovo il suo "collare di perle infilate a matassa, con perle sessantaquattro di conto poste e pichate in s'una cordella doppia d'ariento" che presta al cognato, la sontuosa "cioppa" ricamata che Francesco commissiona a "maestro Giovanni Gilberti ricamatore" per Elena, la sua seconda moglie ("uno tornio d'oro profilato di perle e fermo in certo mathonato lavorato d'oro, argento e seta, e aombrato come si richiede" con "brevi d'oro sul busto profilati di perle"), anelli ("uno zaffiro grande in tavola a otto faccie, legato un gambo d'oro, ancora con smalti da lato, e uno smeraldo in tavola legato in gambo d'oro, ancora con smalti da lato"), pellicce per l'inverno, una ricca spada "unghera" che la sua condizione gli permette di portare in città, e infine le numerose cavalcature di cui si serve. E non mancano spese voluttuarie per l'alimentazione, come gli acquisti dallo speziale (oggi diremmo dal pasticciere): "confetti" per le donne che vengono a visitare la moglie incinta, un "pane di confetto grande" che manda alla moglie di un amico che ha appena dato alla luce una bambina. Nella contabilità, da mercante preciso, entrano anche le "limosine", le candele che manda al convento di Santa Croce per l'anniversario della morte della prima moglie, e "la piantanza" (pane, vino e agnello) per la refezione dei frati. Scarsi, invece, i riferimenti e le notazioni culturali, limitate, almeno in questo quaderno delle *Ricordanze*, a contatti con Andrea Alamanni, Benedetto Accolti, Giannozzo Manetti, Luigi Pulci, e Giovanni Rucellai, nonché all'acquisto di due volumi (un "Giustino e Svetonio" e un "Virgilio") e alla restituzione di un Cicerone che gli aveva prestato Vespasiano da Bisticci.

Lo stile, lo si è detto, generalmente scarno, non lascia trapelare emozioni o entusiasmi, eccetto nell'occasione della nascita dell'erede a lungo atteso: è, forse, l'unico momento in cui il lettore riesce a cogliere il lato più umano e meno mercantile di Francesco di Matteo Castellani, ed è un istante che mi piace ricordare: "Ricordo che in nome dell'onnipotente Dio, nostro signore Iesu Christo, a dì 12 di gennaio [1452] in venerdì, a ore xi 1/2, partorì la Lena mia donna un figlio maschio, e per gratia di Dio resta sana e salva benissimo lei e 'l figlolo, che così gli piaccia guardarci lungo tempo, acrescendolo senpre nella sua gratia bon suo servo virtuoso e valente homo quanto sia nostro desiderio, secondo la sua volontà, per la pietà e misericordia sua, che sia sempre laudato e rengratiato in sempiterno, amen" (171).

Un testo, come si vede, di un rilievo interdisciplinare e di una lettura interessantissima, per il quale, in attesa del secondo volume, non possiamo che ringraziare Giovanni Cappelli.

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Louise George Clubb and Robert Black. *Romance and Aretine Humanism in Sienese Comedy, 1516: Pollastra's Parthenio at the Studio di Siena*. Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1993.

In this volume, Louise George Clubb and Robert Black have collaborated to focus on the often neglected Italian contribution to the history of Renaissance drama. To this end, they have chosen to concentrate on the Aretine humanist and teacher, Giovanni Lappoli (b. 1465), known also as Pollio, Pollastrino or Pollastra, who spent a significant period of his life (1503-1515) in exile in Siena. Clubb contends that Pollastra's *Parthenio*, a verse play in five acts, is "a major landmark in the history of romantic comedy" (15), and in Chapter 4 she presents her edition of the text. An edition of Pollastra's *Triumph* is offered by Black in the Appendix.

In Chapter 1, "Siena, Crucible of Theatre," Clubb discusses the currents that converged in Siena to create a favorable environment for the development of Renaissance drama. First, she notes the preeminent role of the city itself beginning with its devotion to spectacle and its "extraordinary ludic character" (12). The taste for the theater is found among its leading citizens, like Agostino Chigi and Claudio Tolomei, who served as patrons both at home and in Rome. Then there was the strong link between Siena's theatrical interests and Medici patronage. For example, the Medici pope, Leo X, was known as a patron of Sienese theatrical performances and actors in Rome, and the presence of the celebrated pre-Rozzi playwright, Niccolò Campani, lo Strascino, in Leo's entourage is documented (22). Clubb concurs with recent scholarship that the pre-Rozzi may not be the homogenous group of humble artisan-playwrights that Mazzi's classification implies, and she supports the inclusion of non-Sienese, academic playwrights among their ranks. Italian theatrical scholars like Seragnoli and Alonge have expressed the need for more documentation about the pre-Rozzi period that began sometime before the first known editions of their works in 1511 and continued into the second decade of the Cinquecento. Clubb also cites possible ties between the pre-Rozzi theater and the plays of the Intronati academicians and non-Sienese dramatists outside of Siena (Ruzante, Trissino). She notes the close association between Arezzo and Siena as revealed, for example, in Pietro Aretino's correspondence documenting his enduring friendship with Pollastra. In addition, *Virginia*, by the Aretine playwright Bernardo Accolti (known as l'Unico Aretino) was performed in Siena in 1494, and Clubb will show in Chapter 3 how it served as a direct model for *Parthenio*. A detailed study of *Parthenio*, she contends, will help to clarify some of these associations and reveal the important influence of the Sienese theater of the pre-Rozzi period on subsequent developments in European romantic comedy.

Parthenio is the only play by Pollastra to survive (16). It is known to have been performed by students at the University of Siena in 1516 and was first printed in Siena in 1520. It recounts the peregrinations of Parthenio in search of his father, lord of Asia. Along the way, he forgets his first wife, Galicella, who sets out to find him. She resorts to disguise as a male servant, then a handmaid before her true identity is revealed by a magic gem. Exotic locales, female disguise, and the intervention of fabulous devices like a sacred potion and a magic stone are characteristics reminiscent of medieval romance while the verse form of alternating *ottava rima* and *terzine*

evokes some *sacre rappresentazioni* of the late Quattrocento, like *Santa Uliva*. Clubb explains Pollastra's use of these obsolescent features by characterizing the play as deliberately old-fashioned. He was certainly aware of the developing fashion in the courts for avant-garde, neo-classical plays in prose, like Bibbiena's *Calandria* and Machiavelli's *Mandragola*. Nevertheless, he purposely sought to align his drama to a "cultural matrix defined by the municipal life of Siena in the the early Cinquecento, its university and humanistic academic circles, its popular theatre, and its relation to the Medici" (21).

Robert Black succinctly recounts the origins and vicissitudes of the Lappoli family against the political and economic conditions of late medieval Arezzo in Chapter 2, "The Aretine Humanist in Siena." The city, which had lost its independence to Florence in 1384, was a depressed area in the fifteenth century, like the rest of Florence's subject territories (43). Nevertheless, it continued to thrive as an intellectual center with a rich classical and humanist tradition. The illustrious Aretine grammar school where Pollastra was educated eventually appointed him communal grammar master in 1500, but his involvement in the Aretine rebellion of 1502 against Florence led to his exile to Siena in 1503. Black deftly untangles the intricate political maneuverings of the period to show how Pollastra was able to position himself advantageously in Siena, acquire new patrons (the Petrucci and the Medici), and continue his literary development. *Parthenio* is, according to Black, the "affirmation of all that Pollastra had lived and stood for in the years up to 1516" (140).

In Chapter 3, "Romantic Comedy: Lineage, Structures, Contaminatio," Clubb explores the multitude of literary works both learned and popular that served as sources for *Parthenio*. Among them are tales from the *Decameron* (for example, 10:8, 10:5), neo-Latin school plays, Accolti's *Virginia*, the works of the pre-Rozzi playwright, Mariano Trinci, *il Maniscalco*, and *sacre rappresentazioni*. From the latter Pollastra adopted not only the rhyme scheme but also the convention of *luoghi deputati* and the episodic structure in order to "express his deliberate alliance with tradition, *sacre rappresentazioni* and popular pre-Rozzi forms, and with Medici memories" (153). And yet this deliberate evocation of the past is balanced by sophisticated dramatic technique and humanist didacticism. As Clubb successfully demonstrates, the varied *contaminatio* of learned and popular theater, medieval romance and humanist underpinnings in a Siennese context created a theatrical model that could be found in the Intronati plays dating from the 1530s, especially *Gl'ingannati*, the comedy that was to become in turn the model for European comedy and Shakespeare (163-76).

In conclusion, Louise George Clubb and Robert Black have made a valuable contribution to the study of the Renaissance theatre in Italy in this informative and thoroughly researched account of Pollastra and his *Parthenio*.

Valeria Finucci. *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992. Pp. xiv + 332.

Beautifully written and finely argued, *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto* boldly confronts the representation of women in two canonical texts of the Italian Renaissance, Baldassare Castiglione's *Il cortegiano* and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. In her introduction, Valeria Finucci sets the terms of her argument by examining the ways both Castiglione and Ariosto "construct and problematize feminine identities and occasionally male ones" at the same time that they nonetheless succeed in neutralizing sexual and gender differences by succumbing to the notion of a unified subjectivity, the representation of which is "needed by ideology" (4). While not wishing simply to cast irrevocable blame on the two authors for their gender bias, Finucci deftly shows how both authors are products of the historical moment in which they lived and that their *opera* cannot but be themselves enmeshed and governed by the dominant gender system to which they belong and adhere. This adherence, however, does not imply that the figures of women and men who are represented within these texts do not at moments contest, transcend, or question the very construction of gender roles that seeks to normalize all sexualities into a coherent orthodoxy of gender difference.

Equally impressive is Finucci's use of contemporary critical theory, which never threatens to close off her readings of the two works. Instead, Finucci's interweaving of psychoanalytic, feminist and deconstructive theory enhances her readings by complicating the representations of women and men in their subjective complexities. At the same time, Finucci's own theoretical position is clearly articulated. She argues that "just as there is no place for the individual outside of society, there is no place for the subject outside an Oedipal framework and a patriarchal organization of life, for entrance into language means entrance into the symbolic and into ideology. Psychoanalysis is an important tool for me, first because it stresses gender in the formation of one's identity, and second because it enables me to focus on the repression, dispersion, and alienation of an individual's psyche at the precise moment in which that individual's subjectivity is being celebrated" (11). It is precisely this twin perspective that enables Finucci to read the representations of women within the texts in a way that never rests and is never content with easy answers. In so doing, we are also compelled not to rest comfortably within the ideological solution of a "psychoanalytic" moment for a given identity. Thoroughly Lacanian in her reading, Finucci is less interested in a fruitless determination over whether Castiglione and Ariosto are misogynistic *per se* than in exploring how the figures of women, their represented subjectivities, if you will, are recuperated by an ideology that determines Woman as that which stands on the other side of the perfect masculine ideal. Literature for Finucci is thus a dynamic locus of reflection on the ideological construction of gender.

The Lady Vanishes is divided into two major parts. The first part contains three chapters dedicated to Castiglione's *Il cortegiano*. In these chapters Finucci, with remarkable ease, carefully deconstructs the discursive ruses by which Castiglione is both able to allow a place for the court lady to exist within his opus at the same time that "she" is excluded from the world of thought. In other words, her role within the

text is not one of agency, not one whose "I" can name its desire. Instead, she is made to bear the burden of incoherence and irrationality by inhabiting a marginal role whose function is to legitimate the gendering of discourse itself. She mimics, he discourses. Finucci's astute Lacanian deconstruction of the figure and place of woman within Castiglione's text elucidates how the ideological construction of woman functions to guarantee male identity as consistent with a discursive potency predicated on the necessary absence of women's participation in discursive practices. As Finucci tells us, she thus becomes "an enigma, an indecipherable text, unknown or not properly knowable" (42). In her chapter "Cutting and Sewing," Finucci skillfully rehearses Freud's well-known question, "What does woman want?," interrogates the attendant misogynist metaphor of the veil, and questions what would happen if woman said no to that world. In "The Comic Bond," the bond of course being the one between men, woman serves as its condition of possibility. Yet at the same time, she is constructed as a "non-subject," a "non-being," and in order to ensure she stays that way, the joker disparages her, makes her a sign of the ridiculous, the bodily, the excessive. As Finucci points out, the joker controls woman by disparagement and therefore he is able to control his own desire for her by lying to himself, by denying in himself the existence of an irrepressible force that impels him towards woman as what he both desires and fears.

In the second part of the book, Finucci dedicates five chapters to Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. In the chapter on "The Narcissistic Woman," the author shows how Angelica frustrates the codes of male desire by denying men access to her. As long as Angelica has the ring that keeps her invisible, the ring stands for her ability to remain aloof and indifferent to the advances of men. She is the narcissistic woman. Her self-sufficiency and ability to desire her own desire are threatening to the text and to the narrative closure Ariosto's text must perform if gender is to be surrendered to an ideological agenda. In fact, the ever-fleeing Angelica is "punished" by Ariosto and is made to fall in love with someone who is beneath her rank. This humiliation of the narcissistic woman is the price that is exacted from her so that, as Finucci brilliantly shows, Bradamante can take her place as the domesticated, ideal woman who gives up her own desire (her amazon-like qualities) in order to become the wife of Ruggiero and to found his dynasty. This exchange on the symbolic level is the price woman must pay if she is not to be humiliated and if she is to be given a role and status within the established world of men and society. This chapter is perhaps one of Finucci's finest for her use of theory, in this case Freud and Sarah Kofman's analysis of Freud's narcissistic woman. At the same time, Finucci's reading offers a powerful critique of that theory by demonstrating how a woman who knows how to take care of herself or to love herself is punished. In fact, all the chapters that follow are brilliantly crafted and argued to show how, for example, the figure of Olimpia contains both an active and a passive identity and that Olimpia's desire must become corrected by her adherence to the Law of the Father, that is, by acknowledging the powerful paternal metaphor and the power that the phallus has if it is used as an object. In her chapter "(Dis)Orderly Death," Finucci shows how Isabella is raised to the highest status of representing *the* virtuous woman. Almost raped by Rodomonte, Isabella is unable to endure the humiliation of his attempted crime, and like Lucretia purges herself of this dishonor by committing suicide. The virtue of woman is exacted at the moment of her death/suicide. She becomes emblematic of how, as Finucci states "self-erasure is the

road that virtuous women often takes in narrative" (171). Finucci also carefully argues the motives for Rodomonte's action and shows how he is able, through a violent act, to negate any positive feelings he may have for her. He thus attempts to punish Doralice for sexual profligacy through the body of Isabella. But Isabella's position is a conflicted one: as a substitute for Doralice, she stands for impurity at the same time that it is her chaste nature that draws the rapist to her. In her chapter on "Transvestite Love," Finucci argues that even if cross-dressing did have a temporary effect that could cancel out sexual differences as well as social ones, Ariosto's representation of cross-dressing and masquerade in Canto 25 works to neutralize any possible subversive character that the actions of Fiordispina or Bradamante might have while simultaneously giving to Ricciardetto a space that is defined as separate from the female other, a distance that is paradoxically achieved through and because of cross-dressing. Particularly powerful in this chapter is the way Finucci moves through contemporary critical theories on the masquerade and on Lacan's notion of the Phallus to show us how literature indeed symbolizes the very history of the masculine drive to disavow his lack and to project it onto the figure of woman. Her last chapter "The Warrior Woman," appropriately ends with the figure of Bradamante, who becomes the icon of female domesticity as she who comes to embrace the production and nurturing of children. As such, she is aptly described by Finucci as the very embodiment of the "mother of the state" (253). No longer the woman warrior whose very presence in the text might have kept her on an equal footing with men, she is now reduced to representing man's desire back to him be it in the form of his progeny, his history or his state of affairs.

This wonderful book should have a long future, not only for readers of Castiglione and Ariosto, but for anyone interested in the new understanding of Renaissance literature and culture that comes from an appreciation of gender and psychoanalytical issues.

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Danilo Zardin. *Donna e religiosa di rara eccellenza. Prospera Corona Bascapè, i libri e la cultura nei monasteri milanesi del Cinque e Seicento*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki. Biblioteca della Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa, Studi III. 1992. Pp. 280.

Danilo Zardin's monograph is a study of the writing of Suor Prospera Corona Bascapè (1550-1624), that is, of annotations she made on the pages of her catechism sometime in the very early seventeenth-century; but more than that it is a careful reconstruction of the religious and cultural program implemented in women's religious communities in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy, and in particular in the Milan of the post Tridentine reforms of Carlo Borromeo.

Zardin consulted many different sources of cultural information: diocesan and convent records, the literature written for the religious guidance of convent women, books known to have been in the possession of nuns, their dedications, indications of ownership and marginalia. He analyzes Prospera Bascapè's notes in detail; he

traces the publishing history of the catechism on which she wrote and explains how it could have ended up in the hands of that particular nun and why she would have chosen to write prayers, synopses of Biblical texts, episodes of religious history, and miscellaneous observations in its blank spaces. And he reads carefully her annotations, sometimes identifying precisely her source, other times suggesting possible sources, always careful to document the diffusion of these texts in Milan at the time. He discusses the function each text would seem to have had in the religious program of post Tridentine Milan, and he offers on this basis an interpretation of Prospera Bascapè's reading of her sources. Zardin's book, together with a recent essay of his entitled "Mercato librario e letture devote nella svolta del Cinquecento tridentino," provides an impressive list of books written for the edification of nuns, their publishing history, and often, as well, their reception in convent circles.¹

Zardin's vast erudition in this area of study, to which his copious, exhaustive notes attest, allows him both to present a case history, Prospera Bascapè's story, and to provide the necessary context for the study of the culture of convent women in general in the period, and not only in Milan. Prospera Bascapè's intellectual and artistic achievements were not unlike those of many other contemporary convent women of her social class. Her case, it seems to me, is not so exceptional as the title of this book suggests; what is more unusual is that it has come to light, that it has been examined diligently for all that it can tell us about the religious, intellectual, and artistic milieu in which she lived.

Prospera Corona Bascapè belonged to an important Milanese family, though Zardin is unable to situate her precisely in her branch of that family. She was born in 1550, and in 1554 she was sent to the convent of Santa Maria Maddalena del Cerchio for her education. She took the habit of the Humiliati order in 1564 (the nuns were called *umiliate*) and subsequently made her vows. According to Giovanni Pietro Puricelli, an erudite prelate of San Lorenzo Maggiore and her contemporary, who wrote his own notes on her catechism, she was a "donna e religiosa virtuosissima, et organista di rara et esquisita eccellenza" (58). It was not unusual for nuns, or for anyone at the time, to write on the book (or few books) they possessed the things they wanted to remember and for which they would be remembered by those who received the book after them; nor was what Prospera Bascapè wrote very unusual. She listed prayers, the ten commandments, guidelines for her spiritual improvement; she outlined the ages of man and of the world, and she compiled sketchy summaries of stories from Genesis; she also wanted to remember, or memorialize as convent chroniclers did, the stories (to a large extent mythical) of the founding of her order and of her convent, privileges accorded the nuns, an important conflict with authorities that was settled in favor of the nuns, a brief life in Latin of Carlo Borromeo; and finally, again in the manner of chroniclers of the period, she briefly described the appearances of two comets (1577 and 1618) and an occurrence of plague (1576).

Zardin has read Suor Prospera's few notes (scarcely seven pages in his edition,

¹ The full title of the article is "Mercato librario e letture devote nella svolta del Cinquecento tridentino. Note in margine ad un inventario milanese di libri di monache." It appeared in *Stampa, libri e letture a Milano nell'età di Carlo Borromeo*, ed. N. Ramponi and A. Turchini, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1992: 135-246.

published in an appendix) from nearly every imaginable point of view, including the linguistic: her text is a mixture of unsure Latin and the heavily Tuscanized vernacular, in which, as was typical of Milan in the period, there persisted elements of dialect. In at least one instance he also offers a gendered reading, noting that in her version of the founding of the Humiliati order, taken from Bernardino Corio's *Historia di Milano*, she adds mention of nuns together with the friars, whereas her source had left women out of the picture entirely (159). And there is another passage which, it seems to me, could also be illuminated by keeping in mind the gender of the author. In her sketchy notes on the Bible, Suor Prospera places a certain emphasis on the female figures. She regularly accounts for the wives of the descendants of Adam and Eve: her mention of Cain includes Calmana as well. And, alongside the male inventors of music (Jubal), of shepherding (label), of metal sculpture (Tubalcaim), she includes a woman, Noema, inventor of the art of spinning and weaving wool and linen and making cloth for clothing, before which, Suor Prospera claims, people had worn animal skins (255). But most interestingly significant in its oddity, she included, at the end of her notes on biblical history, the following paragraph on the Amazons: "Martesia e Lampadonia regine dele Amazzone, una dela guera, l'altra dela republica. Combateno e non volevano marito, e neli ani 7 li taliavano la mamela dextera per esser più ate a trar le saete et combattere a certi tempi. Usavano con omini secondo si trovavano a combattere, e se facevano fili maschi li rimandavano a soi padri, et se femine li levavano al combattere con esse." A plausible explanation for this reference, barring a similar juxtaposition in a source that has not come to light (Zardin was able to identify the sources followed for other passages but not for this one), is that Suor Prospera was interested in preserving the memory of women, especially women who had made a contribution to history, and, in this case, women who lived in largely self-sufficient, exclusively female communities and who associated with men only when obliged. The analogy to her own situation as a member of a religious female community is too close to be coincidental, and Zardin points out that the Counter Reformation indeed used the Amazons as images of chastity, referring to a nun as "Christ's Amazon" or "sacred Amazon": "amazone di Cristo," "amazone sagra" (196).

Zardin's study begins with the climate of post Tridentine reforms in Milan, and he carefully tells the story of the difficult imposition of certain of them, especially enclosure, in the female convents of the Milanese diocese. He discusses the protagonists of the moment and their methods, especially the devotional literature and practices they promulgated. To characterize Prospera Corona Bascapè, her convent, and convent sisters he looks at the surviving convent records, principally those of controversies in which the authorities intervened and on which they reported. Finally, among the most valuable contributions of this study are Zardin's careful analyses of the documents in the interest of reconstructing the reading — reading matter and method — both as proposed to religious women by the authorities and as actually received, interpreted and used, by religious women of the time.

In this monograph and also in the article "Mercato librario e letture devote," Zardin laments that in the studies of female religious communities, even those recently undertaken, most scholars have concentrated their attention on the exceptional figures and episodes without providing sufficient religious and social historical context for a proper understanding and evaluation of those characters and events ("Mercato librario e letture devote" 136). Zardin's work certainly contributes

such a context. It must be noted, however, and Zardin's work makes it clear that, while it is often not the case, a few other scholars *have* provided a similarly instructive context in their work in this area, most notably Gabriella Zarri, whose name appears in his footnotes so often that it is evident that her work provides the model and point of departure for any study in the field.² With Zardin's important contributions and the recent work of Lucia Sebastiani, Renée Baernstein, and Robert Kendrick, along with the general context, the missing feminine element begins to appear in contemporary accounts of the history and culture of Milan and Lombardy in the age of the Borromeos.³

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Tomaso Garzoni. *Opere*. Ed. Paolo Cherchi. Ravenna: Longo, 1993.

Paolo Cherchi's new edition of a representative selection of Tomaso Garzoni's works is a precious step towards making this important "minor" author more familiar to scholars and illuminating a significant chapter of cultural history. Garzoni's *Opere* contains the complete texts of *Il teatro dei vari e diversi cervelli mondani* (1583), *L'ospedale de' pazzi incurabili* (1586), *La sinagoga degli ignoranti* (1589), *Il mirabile cornucopia consolatorio* (1601, but written around 1588-89), as well as excerpts from his best-known work, the mammoth *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (1585; of which an unabridged edition, edited by Cherchi and Beatrice Collina, will soon be out. Although this *Opere* re-presents the same selection published in Cherchi's out-of-print 1972 edition, the new introductory essay treats not only the moral and ideological aspects of Garzoni's encyclopedic vision (the main focus of the earlier introduction), but also his place in literary tradition. Cherchi has also expanded his excellent notes, dedicated primarily to elucidating the astounding number of sources that Garzoni "borrowed" from.

Garzoni was born in 1549 near Ravenna, and at a young age became a canon

² Zarri's essay "Monasteri femminili e città (secoli XV-XVII)," published in *Storia d'Italia. Annali 9: La Chiesa e il potere politico dal medioevo all'età contemporanea*, ed. G. Chittolini and G. Miccoli, Torino, Einaudi, 1986: 357-429, is cited frequently by Zardin, and it has indeed become a classic in the study of women religious in Early Modern Italy. Also frequently cited and closely related to Zardin's enterprise are Zarri's collection of essays, *Le sante vive. Cultura e religiosità femminile nella prima età moderna*, Torino, Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990, and especially "La vita religiosa femminile tra devozione e chiostro: testi devoti in volgare editi tra il 1475 e il 1520," published in *Libri, idee e sentimenti religiosi nel Cinquecento italiano*, Ferrara-Modena: Panini, 1987: 131-54, and now reprinted in *Le sante vive* 21-50.

³ Lucia Sebastiani, "Monasteri femminili milanesi tra medioevo ed età moderna," in *Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations. Acts of two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1982-1984*, ed. C. H. Smyth and G. C. Garfagnini, II, Firenze: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1989: 3-15; Robert Kendrick, "The Traditions of Milanese Convent Music and the Sacred Dialogues of Chiara Margarita Cozzolani," *The Crannied Wall*, ed. Craig Monson, Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992: 211-33. Both Kendrick and Renée Baernstein have written dissertations on Milanese convents, his in the Music Department of NYU, hers in History at Harvard.

regular of the Lateran Congregation. His career coincided with what Cherchi calls a "Second Humanism," during which many of the erudite humanistic genres, such as the encyclopedia or the *theatrum*, were repropounded "sotto una veste volgare" (19). Moreover, the dramatic growth of the printing industry had created an avid readership that was "ghiotto di novità e di curiosità anche spicciolate" (19), and Garzoni, with his carefully mixed encyclopedic *minestroni* of anthropological vignettes alongside "grappoli di aneddoti, catene di citazioni, o cataloghi di personaggi illustri" (14) was an expert reader of the "horizon of expectations" of his public.

The proliferation of encyclopedic works in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries expressed the urge to decipher the world through an exhaustive cataloging of its contents and, above all, to organize these potentially chaotic contents. The persistent quest for — and faith in — a world that could be described occurred in a period of socio-economic upheavals and undoing of humanistic ideals, and may be considered a compensatory attempt to impose a symbolic order on a reality threatened on all sides by disorder. The encyclopedic genre embodies in a particularly appropriate way this tension, for it contains within itself the paradoxical intention to classify within finite limits a mass of material that is, in fact, infinite and, thereby, never totally classifiable.

Il teatro dei vari e diversi cervelli mondani, which divides temperaments into *cervelli*, *cervellini*, *cervelluzzi*, *cervelletti*, *cervelloni* and *cervellazzi*, is a typical example of Garzoni's technique of "rewriting" the *theatrum* genre, as well as a timely contribution to the European debate on *ingenium*. Garzoni pieces together materials culled, for the most part, from "i vasti repertori in cui si raccolgono i frutti della grande archeologia umanistica" into a cento or "mosaic" to which he contributes the organization and the "seams" that hold them together (17-18). But, as Cherchi emphasizes, Garzoni's literary efforts are not spent only in shows of erudition and moral proselytizing; he also exploits his substantial talents as a comic writer in the vein of Lando, Doni and Folengo. Hyperbole, grotesque caricature and representations of social outcasts (vagabonds, prostitutes) and the extremes of humanity (gluttons, braggarts) share the "spessa coltre erudita che copre ogni sua pagina" (15) with the most respectable of ancient and modern authorities. But perhaps these bedfellows are not so improbable. With a strategy that he will use again and again in his search for material that will appeal to the vastest possible public, Garzoni appropriates the style and themes of the anticanonical tradition only to distance himself from its vision of the paradoxical, "open" nature of reality.

L'ospedale de' pazzi incurabili and *La sinagoga degli ignoranti*, two subsequent phases of Garzoni's project "inteso a debellare il vizio e l'ignoranza" (375), use this same cento technique and treat other "hot" Renaissance topics: madness and ignorance. But we are far from the Erasmian notion of folly as an alternative way of knowing. In Garzoni's eyes, madness in any form, and indeed "ogni forma di sapere deviante dalle dottrine ufficiali" (10), is suspect, and in both of these treatises he attempts to ridicule, and domesticate, his subject matter. *Il mirabile cornucopia consolatorio*, a work under twenty pages, veers away, formally and thenatically, from the other works in this collection. It is a paradoxical "encomium cornuum" in the form of a letter whose intent is to "provare la nobiltà e grandezza del nome di cornuto" (529) through a catalog of historic examples.

But it is *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, a "European best-

seller" with its 25 editions from 1585 to 1675, that best exemplifies the issues at the heart of Garzoni's encyclopedic enterprise. Nearly 1000 pages are filled with descriptions of an exhaustive range of trades and professions, historical examples and moral disquisitions on "good" and "bad" practitioners. One of my only criticisms of this excellent volume regards the fact that most of the *discorsi* that Cherchi includes are of the "picturesque" variety — e.g., "De' tintori," "De' cuochi," "De' carnefici e boi" — whereas those (some of which are cited below) that, in my opinion, are crucial for understanding the ideological supports of *La piazza*, are absent. Although Cherchi notes that *La piazza* seems to lack taxonomical criteria in its organization, the *professori* against whom Garzoni directs his most virulent tirades — among whom we find middlemen, marriage brokers, *ruffiani* and other assorted swindlers, as well as merchants themselves — all base their trades on fraudulent exchange. But the *inganno* inherent in artistic discourse, the radical metaphorization that challenges the conventional similitudes linking the objects of the world and rendering them readable, is Garzoni's ultimate target. The *mascherari*, for example, have an "insatiabile desio di ingannarci ognora, e farci con la maschera di una beltà apparente parer le cose sue e belle," and later in *La piazza* the author sums up: "tutta l'arte non è altro che fallacia e inganno" (645 and 888 of the 1587 Somasco edition).

So what, a potential reader might ask, is the attraction of these voluminous works of an often obtusely moralistic slant dictated by what Cherchi calls Garzoni's "libridinous" abuse of other authors and his "bibliobulimic" love for catalogs that expand to dizzying dimensions? First of all, reading these works is often extremely enjoyable, precisely because their author is so eclectic and unpredictable in his literary approach. And although his "mosaic" technique may seem heavy-handed to the modern reader, there is something about it that reminds us of the astute rearrangements of and subtle winking at texts of the past that today's culture, both "high" and "popular," so often implements. (There is, moreover, a fundamental irony regarding Garzoni's literary pilfering: his emphatic condemnation of fraudulent exchange is enacted in works that are themselves blatant examples of devious negotiation with tradition.) Secondly, Garzoni's works are treasurehouses of "anthropological" information on human types and socio-cultural practices. Finally, and most importantly, these texts embody the anxieties of an intellectual who lived at a time of radical change (the end of an epistemological era, to cite Foucault). But far from embracing the variety and dynamism of human and commercial interplay, or accepting the possibility that illusionistic games and paradox are at the heart of the cultural enterprise, Garzoni's strategy in confronting a world in flux is to hang on, desperately, to the ideal of the representability of this world and to force its multiplicity into a rigid script. We might, ultimately, consider his works, all of which employ an organizing metaphor of architectural space, as vast, crowded prisons whose doors are open but whose inhabitants acquiesce willingly to the strict order that prevails within, from fear of what lies outside.

Stelio Cro. *Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On: Pirandello and the Baroque*. Hamilton: The Symposium Press, 1993. Pp.136.

With the publication of Lionel Abel's *Metatheatre* (1953) many scholars have turned their attention to two conceptual tenets that since then have exerted a great influence on Shakespearean studies as well as studies conducted on the Spanish *comedia*: The world is a stage; life is a dream.

Stelio Cro, influenced and continuing this trend of thought, now proposes a comprehensive perspective of the "Pirandellian" dimension by presenting an organic vision of Pirandello's possible sources of inspiration which in Cro's opinion are to be found in Baroque models. Using a comparative approach, the author stresses the dimension of Pirandello as a dramatist by focusing on the well-known artistic device of "the play within a play" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and, conversely, how this very same structure also serves the same artistic function in Cervantes and Calderón de la Barca.

In his introduction, Cro discusses the main characteristics of the Baroque and the authors whom Pirandello has studied, quoted, and used as inspiration for his plays. In succeeding chapters, he studies in detail the works in which Pirandello has revealed his knowledge of the Baroque. Cro, like others before him who were influenced by Abel's work, conceives the Baroque not only as a literary movement, but as a new way of perceiving reality, a world view. The roots of this world view, argues Cro, are to be found in the use of dramatic *topoi* in Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Calderón, but which are also present in Pirandello's theatrical character and the somewhat "marionette-like quality" of his theatre. Cro identifies these *topoi* as the interaction of illusion/reality present in "the play within the play," the interaction of character/author as revealed by the concept of the "world as a stage," and finally in what he mentions later in his work: that a play, in the Baroque's view, is both "... structurally and thematically a mirror of the larger play which, in turn, is a mirror of life" (55-56).

Starting with the second chapter, Cro traces the aforementioned *topoi*: "the play within the play," "the world as a stage," and the dualism "stage-life-form-life," typical of Pirandello's theater, first in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where in scene II of Act II Hamlet dramatizes the search for truth by willingly participating in a play within a play, or, as in the language of the Spanish *comediantes*, "play-acting," "*haciendo comedia*." Next, Cro examines Cervantes' *Don Quijote* II, where he finds a perfect example of the "play within the play," and "the world as a stage," in the story of the *Retablo de Maese Pedro*, the "puppet show." The author also points out two other works by Cervantes, which show signs of artistically transcending the narrow chronological parameters of the Baroque: *The Licenciado Vidriera* and the one act play *the Retablo de las maravillas*. Finally, the author explores the theatre of Calderón, particularly his play *La vida es sueño*, in relation with themes and ideas that are also pervasive in such works by Pirandello as *Sei personaggi*, *Enrico IV*, and the unfinished play-myth *I giganti della montagna*, among others. Unfortunately, the author does not include in his discussion on Calderón and Pirandello, with the exception on the *auto sacramental* *El gran teatro del mundo*, other significant and perhaps structurally better plays such as the *El medico de su honra*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, and finally, *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, where all three *topoi* are

found and in which one other significant concept easily found in the Spanish *comedia* and perhaps relevant to Cro's study could have been included: the art of "*fingir*," for to feign is exactly and in many instances to participate in "a play within a play," to "play-act," "*hacer comedia*," whether it is our own script or not, as we search for a more effective role whether within a play or in life.

In his conclusion, Cro argues that his comparative approach clearly shows that Pirandello's sources of inspiration for his dramatic production are to be found in Baroque models. The *topoi* of "the world as a stage," "*il sogno è vita*," are present in the Baroque as well as in Pirandello's works. Moreover, he successfully shows this relationship and ascertains the nature of the Baroque theatre and Pirandello's debt to it. Finally, Cro reaches a very significant conclusion in his work which I find to be central to the study of the Baroque theatre; that is, a play is a self-referential device, an artifact, by which as a work of art it justifies itself by reminding us, as an *imago veritatis*, the image of truth a play is, that we are all characters in the world's stage.

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Mark Lilla. *G. B. Vico: The Making of an Anti-Modern*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993. Pp. xv, 255.

In our times, after the Holocaust and the Gulag, we are anxious to detect the reason why European history went astray. Some put the blame on the Romantic Movement that rejected the rational values of the Enlightenment and replaced them with irrational myths that eventually paved the way for Mussolini and Hitler. Others preferred to indict the Enlightenment, a movement that allegedly upheld abstract rationalism and caused the excesses of the French Revolution as well as the upheavals of the twentieth-century. While the first attacked the German and Italian historical school, an offshoot of Romantic philosophy, the second defended the heritage of such a school by showing that rational values were the object of sustained criticism by the eighteenth-century forerunners of the Romantic Movement. This was the position of scholars such as Benedetto Croce, Friedrich Meinecke and Carlo Antoni, whose writings influenced Sir Isaiah Berlin. One can doubt whether it is really necessary to blame the mistakes of the twentieth-century either on the Enlightenment or the Romantic Movement. After all, it is highly probable that both of them contributed to modern degenerations.

It is against this background that Berlin's concept of the so-called Counter-Enlightenment must be understood. According to Berlin, the Counter-Enlightenment was the rebellion against the rationalism of the Enlightenment (in Antoni's terms, the *lotta contro la ragione* or struggle against reason) which developed during the eighteenth-century. The first rebel against the abstract reason of the Enlightenment was Vico who, because of this, was accorded privileged status by Berlin. Now Mark Lilla, having pursued a research along the lines traced by Berlin, informs us that Berlin's interpretation of Vico as the first thinker who challenged the Enlightenment, a monistic ideology, in the name of a new pluralism, needs radical revision: "The present study of Vico's thought was originally conceived as the first

installment of a more extensive investigation into the political philosophy of the Counter-Enlightenment, and especially into its pluralism. . . . The Vico who emerges from its pages may indeed have fathered the Counter-Enlightenment, but he is hardly a pluralist" (6). Lilla takes issue with those interpreters who emphasized the subversive content of the *New Science*. Lilla appears to be more sympathetic with the Catholic interpreters. Like these, he considers the *Universal Law* the metaphysical foundation of the *New Science* and maintains that Vico's science is subservient to religion: "His science of history was invented to help constrain, rather than expand further, the human horizon opened by the modern age. And that science was, above all, meant to serve religion and to stem the tide of decadence that swept in behind modern philosophy" (232).

Lilla's position is very similar to the Catholic one, which is well exemplified by Ada Lamacchia's "Metafisica e nuova scienza nell'opera di Giambattista Vico," in F. Botturi, U. Galeazzi, A. Lamacchia, F. Marco'lungo and P. Porro, *Metafisica e teologia civile in Giambattista Vico*, ed. A. Lamacchia, Bari: Levante Editori, 1992, pp. 11-79. Like Lamacchia, Lilla seems to be unaware of the strong metaphysical bent of such scientists as Boyle and Newton, which means that Vico (contrary to Lamacchia's and Lilla's opinion) was encouraged by the example of the Royal Society to view science and Christianity not as conflicting but as convergent terms. Like Lamacchia, Lilla overlooks that sympathy between Anglican and Catholic scientists that was pointed out by Vincenzo Ferrone in an important book, rich in precious insights into the early eighteenth-century Italian culture, the background of Vichian philosophy (see my review of Ferrone's volume in *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*, 35 [1985]: 450-52). Moreover, Vico dabbled in Medicine and Pharmacology, two scientific fields that, in his times, were still linked to Paracelsian theories (see my "Vico e l'alchimia," in *L'Europa nel XVIII secolo: studi in onore di Paolo Alatri*, I, Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1991, pp. 19-41). Alchemic sources left a strong metaphysical imprint on Vichian thought.

According to Lilla, an "important part of Vico's legacy to the nineteenth and twentieth century is his discovery that a modern social science can serve anti-modern political and religious ends" (234). Vico realized that "a science of man as a subrational creature could be an effective tool for silencing what little reason man has" (234). On this basis, Lilla ends his book by posing the problem of what he views as Vico's role in Western political thought: "What still deserves explanation is how Vico's scientific conquest of reason could, in the centuries that followed, be construed as a victory for human freedom" (234). Here Lilla, a specialist in Political Science, unwittingly shows the way that leads to Fascist interpretations of Vico that one would prefer to forget, such as Walter Witzennann's *Politischer Aktivismus und sozialer Mythos: Giambattista Vico und die Lehre des Faschismus*, Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1935 and Nino Tripodi's *Il pensiero politico di Vico e la dottrina del Fascismo*, Varese: Tipografica Varese, 1941. We believe that Lilla would be dissuaded from pursuing further research in the same direction if he were to meditate on Tripodi's book, which appeared in the "Collana di 'dottrina fascista,'" published under the aegis of the "Scuola di mistica fascista." Tripodi's Vico, viewed through the prisma of Catholic interpreters, obtains the embarrassing honor of being elevated to the rang of Mussolini's forerunners.

Lilla's plea for a conservative Vico is carried through an "Introduction" (1-13)

and five chapters: 1. "Things Human and Divine" (14-56); 2. "Against the Skeptics" (57-103); 3. "The Turn to Science" (104-51); 4. "An Ideal History of the Eternal City" (152-203); 5. "Decadence Ancient and Modern" (204-34). The book under review contains a "Bibliographical Note" (237-49), in which Lilla declares that his work "was conceived as an investigation into Vico's overriding philosophical aims" (237). One is left with the feeling that Lilla's overarching concerns are responsible for his neglect of meaningful details.

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AA. VV. *Vico in Italia e in Germania. Letture e prospettive. Atti del Convegno Internazionale Napoli, 1-3 marzo 1990*. A c. di G. Cacciatore e G. Cantillo. Napoli, Bibliopolis, 1993.

Il volume raccoglie una serie di contributi che cercano di ricostruire i percorsi della ricezione dell'opera di Vico in Germania e testimoniano un rinnovato interesse per la filosofia vichiana nell'ambito della ricerca internazionale degli ultimi anni, evidenziando in particolare una sempre maggiore circolazione degli studi vichiani tra Italia e Germania. Un evento significativo nella *Wirkungsgeschichte* vichiana in Germania è il recente compimento della traduzione tedesca integrale della *Scienza nuova* (*Prinzipien einer neuen Wissenschaft über die gemeinsame Natur der Völker*, Hamburg, 1990) a cura di Vittorio Hösle e Christoph Jermann. Questo evento si iscrive nel quadro di una sempre più incisiva presenza del pensiero vichiano nella cultura tedesca che viene documentata e analizzata nell'ampia relazione introduttiva di Giuseppe Cacciatore e Giuseppe Cantillo sugli *Studi vichiani in Germania 1980-1990*. Una tematica che attraversa tutti i contributi analizzati in questa relazione è quella della topica e della retorica come modello di pensiero distinto da quello scientifico-tecnico, e qui il testo di riferimento rimane *Macht des Bildes* (1970) di Ernesto Grassi, recentemente tradotto in italiano (E. Grassi, *Potenza dell'immagine. Rivalutazione della retorica*, Milano, 1989).

Grassi a più riprese ha sottolineato come la tradizione filosofica umanistica che si afferma in Italia dalla seconda metà del tredicesimo secolo fino alla fine del quindicesimo escluda ogni tipo di formalismo e di formalizzazione del linguaggio. Secondo quella tradizione, gli elementi fondamentali che conducono alla formazione del mondo umano sono il lavoro e la fantasia. Nell'ordine del discorso è il linguaggio figurativo e metaforico che viene così a giocare un ruolo determinante: è questo il linguaggio della poesia e, in particolare, della retorica che viene così ad assumere una vera e propria importanza filosofica, realizzando un nuovo modello di pensiero che si contrappone al rigorismo logico. La filosofia di Vico per Grassi appartiene a questa tradizione umanista e non può quindi essere inserita nell'ambito di una problematica idealistica e hegeliana.

Tra i nuovi contributi agli studi vichiani in Germania si segnala il ruolo egemonico svolto da due studiosi come Ferdinand Fellmann e Stephan Otto. Ferdinand Fellmann, che tra l'altro ha curato un'antologia della *Scienza nuova* (*Neue Wissenschaft*, Frankfurt, 1981), sottolinea soprattutto la centralità della vichiana

considerazione filosofica della storia che nelle intenzioni del filosofo napoletano punta alla configurazione dei nessi tra teoria e agire sociale. Il senso comune nella *Scienza nuova* non nasce dalle discussioni oratorie esercitate nel foro o nella società civile, ma dagli universali fantastici elaborati dalla mente primitiva: sono queste creazioni della fantasia umana che per Fellmann sono da considerare una vera e propria fondazione di una "ragione pratica". Si tratta di rappresentazioni che in qualche modo orientano l'azione in assenza di ogni schematismo razionalistico di tipo aristotelico e senza assimilarsi risolutamente ad una riflessione filosofica di carattere trascendentale. Gli universali fantastici e i miti si pongono insomma come contributi alla creazione delle norme che regolano la vita comunitaria e le istituzioni umane (F. Fellmann, *Vico und die Macht der Anfänge*, in G. B. Vico, *Neue, Wissenschaft*, Auswahl, Übersetzung und Einleitung von F. Fellmann, Frankfurt a.M., 1981).

D'altro canto, in contrasto con questa impostazione che evidenzia la vichiana trasformazione filosofico-storica dell'ontologia, si segnala l'interpretazione di Stephan Otto che riconduce Vico nell'ambito del costruttivismo trascendentale. Il discorso di Otto punta alla chiarificazione delle intenzioni metodologiche e filosofiche del pensiero vichiano. Tra i suoi recenti studi sono da ricordare *Imagination und Geometrie. Die Idee kreativer Synthesis. Giambattista Vico zwischen Leibniz und Kant* (in "Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie" 53, 1981) e un saggio pubblicato nell'ambito di una ricerca di gruppo sul vichiano *Liber metaphysicus* (S. Otto, *Umriss einer transzendentalphilosophischen Rekonstruktion der Philosophie Vicos anhand des Liber Metaphysicus*, in AA. VV., *Sachkommentar zu Giambattista Vicos 'Liber metaphysicus'*, München, 1985).

La rassegna di Cacciatore e Cantillo mette poi in luce l'esistenza di una terza via negli studi vichiani in Germania che si colloca tra l'interpretazione che privilegia l'inserimento di Vico nella tradizione umanistica e storicistico-ermeneutica e quella di chi intende sviluppare i contenuti sistematico-filosofici della vichiana *Scienza nuova*. Questa "terza via" appare rappresentata da Richard Wilhelm Schmidt, con il suo *Die Geschichtsphilosophie G. B. Vicos. Mit einem Anhang zu Hegel* (Würzburg, 1982) che studia la formazione in Vico di una consapevolezza della crisi del sapere moderno e degli aspetti fecondi della scienza.

Alla ricca e documentata ricognizione storico-analitica degli studi più interessanti e originali del pensiero vichiano in Germania ad opera di Cacciatore e Cantillo, fanno seguito gli interventi diretti di alcuni protagonisti del dibattito tedesco tra cui si segnalano ancora Stephan Otto, *Un assioma (Grund-satz) della «Scienza nuova» come principio guida (Leitsatz) per la "critica della ragione storica"*; Ernesto Grassi, *Vico e Ovidio: il problema della preminenza della metafora*; e Ferdinand Fellmann, *Vico e Kant sul cammino della ragione storica*. Il saggio di Otto sottolinea come nella vichiana *Scienza nuova* si possano trovare una serie di principi-guida per la costruzione del profilo teorico che manca alla critica della ragione storica elaborata da Dilthey. Otto studia in questo senso l'uso vichiano del concetto modale di "possibilità" come elemento che consente di pensare la *possibile connessione* tra mondo metafisico e mondo storico. Una nuova critica della ragione storica deve partire proprio da questo principio teorico di grado superiore che sappia creare una "mediazione tra i diversi principi teorici della critica della ragione storica e sia ad essi adeguato" (116-117).

Il saggio di Ernesto Grassi studia il rapporto teorico di Vico con il pensiero di Ovidio che tradizionalmente viene visto come poeta, non come filosofo. Poesia e filosofia per Grassi hanno un comune fondamento metaforico che allude alla molteplicità dei significati dei fenomeni e appare diretta espressione delle passioni umane. La metafora di cui ci parla Vico va inserita nell'ambito di una dimensione arcaica, anteriore alla determinazione del linguaggio razionale e in contrasto con la metafisica tradizionale ontologica che non può ammettere il traslato di significati.

Il saggio di Fellmann stabilisce invece un originale accostamento di Vico e Kant nella genealogia della ragione storica, poiché la divergenza tra il vichiano metodo genetico e il kantiano metodo critico non esclude per Fellmann che in Kant si possano trovare prospettive collegabili all'impostazione antropologica e storica data da Vico alla sua *Scienza nuova*. L'originaria intuizione vichiana viene indicata proprio nella trasformazione antropologica della metafisica che dà origine ad una filosofia della storia paga della conservazione del genere umano e chiusa nel cerchio ripetitivo dei corsi e ricorsi. L'apertura verso il futuro e verso un'idea di progresso si trova invece nel breve scritto kantiano intitolato *Congetture sull'origine della storia*, dove il filosofo tedesco pone il fondamento antropologico del suo concetto dinamico di ragione. La funzione della fantasia nel processo della conoscenza storica viene così riconosciuta sia da Vico che da Kant; ma mentre per il primo la fantasia produce immagini che hanno effetti stabilizzanti sui comportamenti umani e che non trovano un sostanziale progresso nella ragione, il secondo vede invece nella fantasia un elemento di liberazione dai vincoli istintuali posti agli esseri umani e apre la strada ad una ragione che non conosce più limiti a propri progetti.

Questi rapidi accenni ad alcuni dei contributi del volume danno un'idea, sia pure sommaria, del sofisticato livello di approfondimento cui è giunta l'opera di Vico in Germania, e rendono meritoria questa iniziativa editoriale nata sotto gli auspici del "Centro di studi Vichiani" di Napoli. D'altro canto è proprio la vitalità del pensiero del filosofo napoletano a uscire confermata sul piano internazionale e a mantenersi all'altezza delle principali questioni filosofiche contemporanee. Se ne trova un'ulteriore testimonianza nell'ampio saggio di Christoph Jeram su *La recezione di Vico in Gadamer*, che segnaliamo da ultimo. Jeram riconosce il carattere "evoluto" dell'impostazione ermeneutica che si trova nella *Scienza nuova*, al punto da sottolinearne la *rilevanza* e l'*attualità* rispetto alla stessa ermeneutica di Gadamer. Con questa nota concludiamo la nostra breve rassegna, non prima di aver ricordato la presenza nel volume di articoli e saggi di importanti studiosi di Vico italiani come Mario Agrimi, Gianfranco Cantelli, Donatella di Cesare, Alessandro Giuliani, Nicola Badaloni e Angela Maria Jacobelli Isoldi.

Massimo Lollini, *University of Oregon*

Antonio Illiano. Morfologia della narrazione manzoniana dal "Fermo e Lucia" ai "Promessi Sposi." Firenze: Edizioni Cadmo, 1993. Pp. 155.

L'interesse dei critici nei confronti della narrativa del Manzoni si è limitato nel passato in gran parte all'arte del narrare (a questioni, quindi, di ordine stilistico) oltre a confronti pressoché continui con opere e scrittori del passato, confronti quasi

sempre condizionati da una visione tradizionale e circoscritta del romanzo. Anche negli ultimi due decenni, nel corso cioè di un periodo di fermento critico-intellettuale innestato ai nuovi valori della teoria letteraria provenienti maggiormente dalla Francia, pochi, in verità, sono stati i tentativi di disanima delle strategie del narrare nei *Promessi sposi*. Parlo di tentativi volti a un discorso chiaro e concreto, atto a metter in rilievo quanto di moderno e di singolare si possa riscontrare nel romanzo del Manzoni.

Cosciente di tale lacuna, Antonio Illiano ci propone una morfologia della narrazione manzoniana che illumina in modo organico e comprensivo le molteplici strategie del narrare ravvisabili nel *Fermo e Lucia*, nei *Promessi sposi*, e nella *Storia della colonna infame*. Il mezzo utilizzato è l'esemplificazione, indice di un lavoro di selezione assiduo e faticoso che per certi versi può anche definirsi *a labor of love* per l'opera del Manzoni. Va aggiunto che le citazioni testuali non soffocano, come spesso accade, il filo del discorso, ma lo complementano e l'invigoriscono poiché si pongono quale conseguenza e dimostrazione ultima di riflessioni critiche vagliate con calma.

La Prefazione, evitando i soliti schemi di giustificazione del volume, entra nel vivo della narrazione manzoniana enunciandone le voci più significative, tra le quali va rilevato il rapporto multiforme tra l'autore (autore-scrittore o semplicemente chi scrive), il narratore (che nel *Fermo e Lucia* si autodefinisce redattore-trascrittore) e il lettore, o meglio i lettori quali "individui leggenti e ascoltanti", come li definiva il Berchet nella *Lettera semiseria*. Illiano sostiene che a generare il romanzo manzoniano è "la duttile coerenza di una prassi narrativa che . . . illumina i processi della scrittura e preordina quelli della lettura" (xi). Da tale coerenza e dal rapporto di cooperazione che scaturisce tra narratore e autore-scrittore "emerge un sistema di strategie" (xi) che porteranno l'impronta dell'arte manzoniana, strategie quali la diegesi e la mimesi, l'allocuzione, la pseudocitazione, la preterizione, e la digressione.

Questi ed altri elementi, ordinati in tredici capitoli di varia estensione, costituiscono i nuclei più importanti del saggio di Illiano. In questo spazio ci limiteremo a sottolinearne le espressioni di maggior interesse. Va segnalata pertanto l'attenzione dello studioso all'attività narrativa quale "preoccupazione profonda e costante del Manzoni" (7), il quale, affidandosi in gran parte alla diegesi, "tende naturalmente a una dimensione metanarrativa per molti rispetti precorritrice delle poetiche del romanzo novecentesco" (7). In questi termini, Illiano si sofferma sulla funzione che svolge il lettore nei *Promessi sposi*, vale a dire in una struttura narrativa che, riportandosi alla lezione dello Scott, accoglie il lettore come parte integrale del romanzo; pertanto "il lettore interviene nell'opera a rappresentare gli interessi dell'eventuale pubblico dei 'fruitori'" (8). Emerge così la figura del lettore che serve da "interlocutore muto ma tutt'altro che mite e accondiscendente", partecipe di "un rapporto implicitamente dialogante tra chi scrive e chi legge" (10) il cui fine, già auspicato dal *Conciliatore*, sarà quello di trasformare il pubblico "non curante" in pubblico "giudicante".

Incisivo anche il capitolo VI dal titolo "Innesto della diegesi nelle introduzioni" in cui viene rilevata l'importanza fondamentale e il carattere organico delle tre introduzioni del romanzo; spazio strategico e vitale, quello delle introduzioni, in cui l'autore "mirava a sistemare il quadro delle funzioni basilari del racconto, a definire il

'codice' della narrazione e avviarne i meccanismi" (55). Nel capitolo successivo (65-87) Illiano discute, tra le modalità del narrare, il rapporto che intercorre tra i registri dell'enunciazione soggettiva: il noi, cioè, del narratore e l'io dell'autore. Ne risulta un'analisi attenta delle "competenze specifiche" del soggetto narrante corredata da riferimenti testuali che, oltre a servire da referti esemplari, mettono in risalto "la sapienza narrativa" del Manzoni. Notevole anche l'attenzione alla pseudocitazione e alla digressione. La prima è definita "un sistematico richiamo testuale al presupposto che il racconto deve intendersi come rifacimento di un (presunto) manoscritto-documento che garantisca l'attendibilità dell'opera romanzesca" (88). La digressione, "notevole per la sua funzionalità squisitamente compositiva ed integrativa" (172), si articola in parentesi riflessive e inserti esegetici, ma l'uso più comune è di servire all'inserimento di personaggi e avvenimenti quasi sempre storici. Anche qui Illiano conferisce alla funzionalità della digressione manzoniana valore extra-testuale, ponendo in risalto la mirabile coerenza manzoniana tra l'esercizio intellettuale dello scrittore, la scrittura, e il fine ultimo del narrare, che è di ordine artistico e morale. Riportiamo il commento di Illiano sulla digressione del Manzoni che, in questo caso, riguarda la vita di Federigo Borromeo (cap. xxii): "Insomma il testo non deve lasciare neanche uno spiraglio a una sia pur effimera obiezione all'interesse e coerenza di un panegirico che obbedisce, come obbediva appunto il ministero di Federigo, al senso del dovere e della necessità" (119-20).

Va detto, per concludere, che il discorso critico di Illiano vuole trascendere "i cerebralismi e bizantinismi delle neoteorie" (xii) che, in effetti, tendono ad offuscare il testo anziché elucidarne o facilitarne il senso. Ciononostante, anche quello dell'Illiano è spesso un linguaggio tecnico, con un suo complesso di termini e formulazioni poco comuni, per non dire specialistici. È doveroso però segnalare che, conscio di dover condurre un discorso critico fatto in gran parte di strutture e tecniche narrative, Illiano cerca di chiarirne i risvolti più astrusi tramite definizioni, elucidazioni e, come si è detto, esemplificazioni testuali. Comunque, anche quando lo scritto di Illiano tende al tecnico, è sempre lontano dall'asfittico. Anzi il lettore risconterà osservazioni e giudizi di notevole valore. Si veda, ad esempio, quanto segue: "Il monologo di Don Abbondio [cap. xxiii], in quanto espressione del bisogno di sussistere all'interno di una visione irriducibilmente egocentrica, è radicato in una forma cronica di autocompatimento vittimistico e quindi chiuso a ogni possibilità di redenzione" (37). Indice, questo, di acume critico da valorizzare assieme all'apporto proficuo del saggio, e all'impegno totale dell'autore nei confronti del Manzoni.

Augusto Pallotta, *Syracuse University*

Gaetano Cipolla. *The Poetry of Nino Martoglio.* New York: Legas, 1993. Pp. xxix + 304.

Nino Martoglio, un nome così ingiustamente trascurato dalla critica italiana (e fu grande drammaturgo, poeta e regista ammirato da Carducci e lodato da Pirandello), è stato finalmente rivendicato oltreoceano, grazie all'ultimo libro di Gaetano Cipolla intitolato *The Poetry of Nino Martoglio*, in siciliano col testo a fronte in inglese.

Cipolla ha scelto dalla raccolta poetica di Martoglio, intitolata *Centona*, gli scritti più significativi e caratteristici della personalità martogliana, distribuendoli in spazi narrativi diacronici a effetto "ascendentale". Il risultato è quello di aver raccontato, attraverso la presentazione selettiva dei versi di Martoglio, tutta la poetica dello scrittore siciliano che va dalla giustificazione dei propri versi, ai dialoghi dei sottofondi e disquisizioni sull'amore, per concludersi con due capolavori che sono vere e proprie messe in scena drammatiche e cioè *Deposizione e Triplice alleanza*.

Sin dai versi inaugurali in cui l'autore dialoga con la propria opera, si delineano immagini chiaroscurali soffuse di malinconia che servono a incorniciare le poesie che seguono. Ci sono le campane della chiesa di Sant'Agata, le donne festanti, i venditori di noccioline e gli zampognari, i sorrisi insomma, ma anche le lacrime ("dintra di tia ci trovu, nichi e granni,/ chiddi chi chianciu a lacrimi pirenni" "I find those things in you, both large and small,/ whose loss I've mourned with sad unending tears"), la morte e le cose perse ("tutti li cari mei ca sunnu morti" "tutti li cosi ca pirdivi in parti" "All things I lost in part," "All my dear relatives who've passed away"). L'effetto è quello di rumore di voci parlate insieme (che è il significato del termine "centona"). Sono le voci della sua Sicilia che profuma di sole e di sangue ("ss'oduri di Sicilia 'ncueta").

L'anima che abita le poesie martogliane non ha subito alterazioni nella traduzione inglese di Gaetano Cipolla. È vero che un conto è tradurre parole e altro conto è filtrarci l'anima. Ma Cipolla da esperto traduttore (si veda a proposito la sua traduzione delle *Favole morali* e del *Don Chisciotte* di Meli) quest'anima trasparente colorata di siciliano non l'ha affatto opacizzata. Nel tradurre non ha minimamente scolorito i ritmi o sacrificato alla referenza i moduli espressivi dell'autore. Anzi, è riuscito addirittura a neutralizzare quella distanza che a volte sorge tra dialetto e lingua. Martoglio in inglese ha mantenuto la stessa leggerezza e celerità del dialogato, caratteristica dell'originale testo dialettale.

La prova ritmica di questa aderenza al testo originale è la trasposizione della rima. Cipolla non ha parafrasato né sintetizzato il verso martogliano, ma l'ha calato così com'era, col battito della rima, nel nuovo spazio linguistico costituito dall'inglese, trasponendone la familiarità e le campiture cromatiche. Ne ha così preservato gli echi e le sfumature, il movimento e il metro, insomma tutte quelle cose che caratterizzano la poetica di Nino Martoglio. Ne riportiamo un esempio, sintomatico di questa tecnica di traduzione "parallela" eseguita da Cipolla.

Li me' sunetti

Ju li cughhivi 'mmenzu li lurdumi,
'ntra li taverna, 'ntra lu lupanaru,
unni lu nostru suli è tantu avaru
di luci, né virtù, nè c'è custumi.

Ju li cughhivi unni paru paru
lu sangu allimaratu scurri a sciumi,
unni lu scuru è fittu e c'è pri lumi
sulu ocche luci luci picuraru.

E li cughii di notti, sgammittati
 e tastiannu comu l'orvi muru muru
 e zuppicanu comu li sciancati.

Pricchissu, ed anchi pricchì su' sicuru
 chi a fari lustru non su' destinati,
 ju li vosi chiamari: "'o scuru, 'o scuru".

My Sonnets

My sonnets were collected out of sight
 in taverns, caves, among all kinds of filth,
 wherein our sun is stingy with its light,
 where neither virtue reigns nor any worth.

I gather them where thickly flows the blood
 as in a river, mixed with muck and mud,
 where darkness reigns supreme, and where alone
 the light of fireflies has ever shone.

I gathered them at night with missing legs,
 feeling my way on walls as blind men do
 and tripping on the ground as someone lame.

For this and for the fact I've stirred the dregs,
 and since they're not meant to enlighten you,
 I chose "deep darkness" as their rightful name.

Infine il saggio introduttivo di Cipolla, che traccia l'opera poetica di Martoglio e si sofferma dettagliatamente su lavori come *Triplice alleanza e Deposizione*, è da considerarsi chiave di lettura indispensabile per una fruizione totale del testo martogliano che ancor oggi rimane (agrodolce) testamento d'amore di un uomo per la sua gente.

Annalisa Saccà, *St. John's University*

Antonino Musumeci. *La musa e mammona, L'uso borghese della parola nell'Ottocento italiano*. Il portico, 98. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1992. Pp. 158.

The false god Mammon may not be immediately recognized in its Italian version, juxtaposed to the patron goddess of the arts. Our contemporary taste for the unusual, the striking, "la meraviglia," is perhaps well served by the title; what survives of rationalism is better served by the subtitle. But the latter, too, introduces some difficulties, for again a straightforward statement of the subject of this book is avoided. The *Premessa* is a further self-indulgence, a further screen with which to shield rather than reveal, for the address to the reader coily undercuts itself by

questioning whether in effect there will be a reader. Perhaps all this caution, this *dovrei e non dovrei*, is understandable in view of the unusual texts examined in this study — studied, however, through an approach that is not at all unusual. The project is to present a method of reading to facilitate understanding these texts — and here we reach the clinching disclosure — “misteriosamente riemersi dopo oltre un secolo nelle vaste praterie del Midwest Americano” (8).

Sometimes the lonely scholar, secluded in the fastness of his study, an exile from the culture into which he was born yet pushed up against it by the day-to-day routine of classroom and library, is rewarded with a rare gift: a work or a group of works that he is the first to subject to analysis, although they were not written yesterday, like a best- or not best-seller, but long enough in the past to have become historical. How are they going to be read? There are no guides, no models, no reviews of earlier criticism to lead the way. They are new because they have been rediscovered, chance has preserved them, chance has brought them to the attention of the scholar-critic who is their first reader after the reader(s) for whom they were written. We have no contemporaneous views of them and no succession of views thereafter. Luckily — or unluckily? — they are not works of great esthetic value, indeed their worth is more contingent than intrinsic. Contingent in the manner of their rediscovery but also in the cultural context into which they have reemerged. Ten or twenty years ago they would have at most attracted the attention of some bibliophile, of some antiquated *erudito*. Although in form the most traditional in Italian — and for that matter European — literature, they were already out of style when written; they and the tradition from which they derive are today only retrievable through scholarship. A whole series of ruptures, from Romanticism to the avant-gardes of the 20th Century, stand between us and them.

The Biblioteca Cavagna Sangiuliani was acquired by the University of Illinois Library shortly after World War I. The cataloguing of its more than 100,000 items has only recently been completed. Among the 85,000 printed works are the *epithalamia* and the *laudationes funebres* which occasioned this study. Clearly organized and tightly argued, it is a model for the presentation of arcane subject matter and for pressing significance out of it. Ninety-nine out of a hundred scholars would no doubt have passed by the ephemeral publications *per nozze* and *in morte* that Musumeci patiently, lovingly, almost obsessively examined.

One chapter each is devoted to the two genres, further subdivided into a historical perspective on the genre and its development, and its 19th-century treatment according to the evidence in the Cavagna Collection. Musumeci establishes, to make use of his critical vocabulary, the “classical code” and traces it in its various transformations (“transitional code”), in order to arrive at the “bourgeois code” revealed in these responses to the two fundamental moments of existence, love and death (156). No doubt there is something mechanical in the resulting characterizations, in the method and its application. As with every scientific (theoretical) framework, so close to the straitjacket, there is a tendency for specificity, for the particular in the universal, to be lost. This tendency is underscored by the third chapter of this work, more precisely the second part of Chapter I, the “apparent digression” (21) on the coming to power of the middle class (middle classes?) in 19th-century Italy. It is a *de rigueur* historical introduction in the ideological perspective of the 1970s, somewhat difficult to reconcile with the

affectionate evocation of the figures with which Musumeci became acquainted in the course of his work: "il loquace ed ansioso avvocato Carlo . . . il burocratico ed egoistico professor Pietro Martire Rusconi . . . l'innominato cugino di Paolo Soldati" (8-9), etc. To reduce all these to the status of worshippers of Mammon seems to me an unwarranted short-cut to the identification of a "bourgeois" value system.

What finally is Musumeci's contribution to scholarship in the broader sense with this book? It shows that genre studies are once again firmly established in the study of Italian literature. In the chapter on *epithalamia* especially, it is rich in much useful bibliography culled from English, American and French sources, thus undermining the still all too frequent barrier of linguistic and national compartmentalization. And in the repeated references to the author *alle prese* with his material, it humanizes in an engaging manner an activity which has too often been portrayed only by the "publish or perish" imperative.

Olga Ragusa, *Columbia University*

Frank I. Calderone. *Il ciclo dei "vinti" da Verga a De Roberto.* Ravenna: Longo, 1992. Pp. 252

In this highly readable and well documented book the author sets out to demonstrate the extent to which Verga's major works are cyclical and how the cycle of the "vinti" is continued and brought to conclusion by Verga's friend, disciple, and critic, Federico De Roberto.

To be sure, the mention of the close correlation between the two Sicilian authors has been almost a commonplace. It has already been mentioned and, to a greater or lesser extent, discussed by well-established critics such as Spinazzola, Madrignani, Tedesco, Sipala, Grana, Scuderi, etc. However, as Calderone points out, there has not been a critical study focusing exclusively on the cycle of the "vinti," neither in its "moto evolutivo né nella sua dialettica unitaria" (11), except for three articles published by himself. In this book, the basis for which was the author's Ph.D. dissertation, Calderone brings out the myriad of connections leading the way to a cohesive development and conclusion of the cycle through which Verga intended to represent society's evolution, from the most elementary "appetites" to luxury. As is well known, of the five novels envisaged by Verga — *I Malavoglia*, *Mastro don Gesualdo*, *La Duchessa di Leyra*, *L'Onorevole Scipioni*, *L'uomo di lusso* — only the first two were completed, while the third was abandoned after a chapter or so. De Roberto, who not only knew intimately Verga's writings but was also in close contacts with him, concluded the cycle with his novels about the Uzedas, *L'illusione*, *I Viceré*, and *L'Imperio*.

To show the cohesive and/or parallel elements — thematic, linguistic, ideological, and situational — in both Verga and De Roberto, Calderone divides his book in two parts, the first containing Chapters 1-6 and the other, Chapters 7-10. The world of the "vinti" is present in several short stories and novels, delineating a movement from a human, "primitive" society to a "modern" one, bringing with it a change in positive values inversely proportional to the acquisition of goods and

power, as shown in the stories ranging from Verga's *Vita dei campi* through De Roberto's *L'Imperio*. This is a daunting task, but Calderone, clearly in control of the primary texts and mindful of existing criticism, leads the reader through a systematic, step-by-step "discovery" of previously unacknowledged pieces of a giant tapestry.

In a brief discussion on the philosophical and stylistic bases for the cycle, the author reminds us of the connections with Darwin, Flaubert, and especially Zola and his "le débordement des appétits." The "appetites" drive the Darwinian struggle for social climbing and "progress," changing from elemental to complex, from a hunger for basic food to a hunger for power and control, from the "primitive" phase of *Nedda* and *Vita dei campi* to *L'Imperio*. The author shows that the cycle of the "vinti" starts thematically with *Nedda* (1974), even though Verga has not yet adopted the stylistic devices of impersonality and indirect free dialog. Death, as a liberation from suffering and poverty, is a recurring theme in the first phases of the cycle, such as in *Vita dei campi* (*Rosso Malpelo*, *Fantasticheria*) and *I Malavoglia*. Death here is described very sparingly, whereas in later works, where better social conditions bring about a firmer attachment to life, the authors give progressively more detailed and disturbing descriptions of sickness and death (Nunzio, Bianca and Gesualdo in Verga, Giacomo in De Roberto) (37).

In Chapter 2 the "primitive" phase of the cycle is analyzed through the lives of *Rosso Malpelo*, *Jeli il pastore*, *L'amante di Gramigna*, and *La lupa*, where there is either a lack of knowledge of social and ethical principles, as in the first two stories, or a disregard of those principles because of overwhelming passion, as in the latter two stories. The analysis is carried out through meticulous textual comparisons, a method employed by Calderone throughout his book, and points to the structural importance of these stories, since these motifs are taken up, closing the cycle, in the last pages of *L'Imperio*, and point to a possible remedy, the family, as "istituzione 'primordiale' e stabile" (51), the theme of the first novel of the cycle.

In the following chapter the author observes that in *Fantasticheria* Verga introduces an ancient and patriarchal civilization, based on the concept of "religion of the family," through which traditional values are respected and handed down. Important is the observation that "scoglio" and "sassi" are symbols of natural stability, personified here and in *I Malavoglia*. Rather perceptive and indeed helpful is Calderone's restructuring of *I Malavoglia* into three equal parts, rather than two, giving it a semblance of a three act tragedy (59). This novel itself is cyclical, because at the end tranquillity returns to Acitrezza and the Malavoglias of the first chapter will continue the line through Alessi's children. At the same time, some important points of reference are set apart: the importance of family and traditions, the absolute importance of keeping one's word, and the honesty and honor of women, on which the family honor depends. Wanderings away from the family and economic amelioration are successive stages of the cycle of the "vinti." As Calderone states, "L'idea del ciclo dei 'vinti' come una narrazione continuata da un'opera all'altra è quindi sempre presente in Verga" (82).

This notion is shown in Chapter 4, "L'idolatria della roba e l'orgoglio dei padroni nel *Mastro don Gesualdo*." The author interprets this novel as providing an answer to a hypothetical question, "What would have happened to 'Ntoni, to his family, and to his whole town if he had returned as a rich man?" Here we are removed from the "primitive" state, where society was founded on family, home, and work and

on an equilibrium of good and evil, of ownership of material goods and woman (83). The satisfaction of greater "appetites" brings about the downfall of the family. One's word is no longer his bond; so the written document, in the form of the testament, becomes a dominant feature, even in its absence, as in the case of Baroness Rubiera and Gesualdo himself.

In the following two chapters, Calderone shows the clear line of succession from Verga to De Roberto, not in the form, but in the content of *Il paradiso perduto* and *L'illusione* and in the images of vanity and the loss of Eden. Vanity, individualism, the satisfaction of higher — and, therefore, more artificial and negative — "appetites," and the imposition of one's will on others are the main forces driving the rest of the cycle. Especially in *I viceré*, the "religione della famiglia" is completely overturned, as exemplified by the dissolution of marriages and the disinheritance, in a written testament, of Consalvo. But there are many other affinities in the two authors' minor works that provide irrefutable evidence of the interconnection between the works treated, whose goal is "rappresentare l'umanità nella sua evoluzione sociale che diviene allo stesso tempo un'involuzione morale" (151).

Part II is intended to show that the connecting elements between the two "verismo" authors are also evident, and plentiful, in the typology and in the symbolic use of certain animal families, reflecting the evolutionary, economic, and social trajectory and its corresponding moral "involution" experienced by many primary and secondary characters. In "L'evoluzione del 'pentolaccia' nel ciclo," examples are given even from Capuana's works. In fact, his pseudo-popular song "Lu cumpari" not only contains the theme of the cuckold but had an influence on the popular form adopted by Verga in his "verismo" works (157). The "pentolaccia" types are categorized as "ignari," "meno ignari," and "venali." Through intertextual comparisons it is easy to see that the venial cuckold reaches its extreme expression in the figure of Garino in *I viceré*. In any case, this theme is interwoven and contrasted with the two primordial principles on which rests a family's stability, honor and "ownership" of the woman (181).

Of the last three chapters, "Le vespe e i vagabondi nel ciclo," "L'evoluzione di alcune metafore e i 'canidi,'" and "I simboli equini," the last two are especially interesting. As the wolf, the dog, and the fox represent the human "appetites," as Calderone suggests, the donkey, the mule, and the horse represent the social strata corresponding to the various phases of the appetites, that is, the world of the poor, the world of the middle class, and the world of the nobles. With the return of the symbol of the donkey in the last chapter of *L'Imperio*, we have the last proof of the ideological unity of the cycle binding together two writers who are fundamentally different, in temperament, creativity, and artistic ability (246).

The main merit of this book rests not so much on the originality of its content but on the thoroughness of the author's research and on the use of sources. The linearity and clarity of its exposition makes this book valuable both to scholars and to more casual readers.

Antonio Lucio Giannone. *Futurismo e dintorni*. Lecce: Congedo Editore, 1993. Pp. 135.

In questo volume Giannone raccoglie una serie di saggi e recensioni da lui già pubblicati tra il 1976 e il 1992. Fanno eccezione i primi due scritti, "Teoria e pratica del paroliberismo" e "Scheda su 'Lacerba'", i quali costituiranno le voci "Parole in libertà" e "Lacerba" nel *Dizionario del futurismo*, a cura di E. Godoli, di prossima pubblicazione presso l'editore Cantini di Firenze. Il titolo del volume preannuncia la latitudine dei criteri in base a cui i vari scritti sono stati inclusi nella raccolta. La prima parte riunisce nove brevi saggi e una recensione in cui sono considerati vari aspetti, momenti e figure del movimento futurista. La seconda parte, comprendente tre recensioni ("Il ritorno del *Peccato* di Boine", "Alle origini dell'*Allegria*: le lettere dal fronte di Giuseppe Ungaretti", "*Uccidi*: note di guerra di Tommaso Fiore") e un supplemento bibliografico ("Aggiunte alla *Bibliografia* di Aldo Palazzeschi"), allarga i parametri della raccolta associando scrittori come Boine, Ungaretti, Fiore e Palazzeschi in un'area culturale vagamente designata come "dintorni" del futurismo.

Mancando uno scritto introduttivo che sopperisca alla frammentarietà della raccolta, i presupposti metodologici della ricerca di Giannone vengono indirettamente formulati in "Un libro sul futurismo", la recensione a *Futuristi nelle Marche* di Anna Caterina Toni (Roma: De Luca, 1982) che conclude la prima parte del volume. Nell'offrire una positiva valutazione dell'approccio "microstorico" assunto dalla Toni, Giannone sembra anche giustificare il proprio fondamentale proposito di riportare alla luce le articolazioni locali, gli episodi dimenticati, le figure trascurate del futurismo. Tale proposito, a detta dello stesso Giannone, si colloca nell'ambito di un "nuovo corso" della critica futurista, che risale alle indagini iniziate da Crispolti nei primi anni Sessanta, e acquista vigore durante gli anni Settanta, grazie soprattutto all'opera di Luciano De Maria, Glauco Viazzi, Umberto Carpi, Luciano Caruso e Claudia Salaris. Caratteristica principale di questo nuovo corso è un impegno di ricerca storiografica che abbandona la riduttiva prospettiva pitturocentrica, Boccionicentrica e Marinetticentrica, prevalsa fino alla fine degli anni Sessanta, per ricostruire un'immagine meno parziale del movimento attraverso il suo "complesso e variopinto mosaico di riviste e di gruppi e personaggi, attivi nel periodo tra le due guerre su tutto il territorio nazionale" (98).

Gli scritti della prima parte sono infatti ordinati in modo da spostare l'attenzione del lettore dagli aspetti più centrali del movimento a quelli più marginali e periferici: le manifestazioni provinciali, le figure minori e la vita "postuma" del futurismo. Si parte da una breve storia della "Teoria e pratica del paroliberismo", che riassume i principi fondamentali della poetica futurista e ripercorre le tappe della sua evoluzione, dalle prescrizioni categoriche e dalle radicali sperimentazioni dei primi anni Dieci, alla "versione più elastica e allargata" degli anni Trenta (17).

I due saggi seguenti considerano i due diversi momenti del futurismo fiorentino. "Scheda su 'Lacerba'" riassume le tumultuose vicende della rivista con particolare attenzione alla sua fase futurista: la breve collaborazione di Papini, Soffici e Palazzeschi col gruppo milanese di Marinetti (marzo 1913-agosto 1914); la polemica contro il paroliberismo e il "marinettismo" iniziata da Papini coll'articolo "Il cerchio si chiude"; e la successiva rottura, definitivamente sancita dall'articolo "Futurismo e Marinettismo" firmato da Papini, Soffici e Palazzeschi (14 febbraio 1915). Del

secondo gruppo fiorentino, costituito dai fondatori e collaboratori del periodico "L'Italia futurista", Giannone esamina invece l'abbondante produzione di prose liriche. Notando che tale produzione non è riconducibile ai canoni ufficiali del futurismo, e che la critica ha esagerato l'importanza di certe prefigurazioni surrealiste, l'autore propone un approccio di "integrale storicizzazione" (30) e identifica convergenze stilistiche e tematiche tra la poetica della "pattuglia azzurra" e il frammentismo vociano.

Da questa poetica ai margini della sperimentazione parolibertista si passa a Fortunato Depero, l'artista che forse più di ogni altro ha spinto la teoria e invenzione futurista al di là dei limiti tradizionali dell'arte, nel nuovo territorio della comunicazione di massa. Giannone sottolinea l'importanza del libro "imbullonato" (*Depero futurista*) e delle *Liriche radiofoniche*, dove l'artista di Rovereto afferma una nuova concezione del libro come involucro reclamizzante del prodotto-arte, e sperimenta con le nuove possibilità artistiche desunte da radiotelegrafia e cinematografia.

Nei tre saggi successivi Giannone si sposta in un ambito prettamente provinciale dove, a mio parere, egli offre il suo contributo più valido. "Il Futurismo nel Salento" e il "profilo" dell'aeropittore leccese Mino delle Site compongono una storia dettagliata della esperienza futurista nella zona di Lecce. "Il futurismo 'selvaggio' di Giacomo Giardina" illustra invece l'esperienza poetica di un pastore siciliano autodidatta, esponente di una corrente agreste e bucolica del futurismo. Queste minute ricostruzioni delle vicissitudini del movimento in ambienti culturali prevalentemente ostili alle innovazioni dell'avanguardia aggiungono altre tessere al mosaico della "molteplicità topografica" e della plurivocità che contraddistingue il futurismo rispetto ad altri movimenti d'avanguardia — caratteristica già sottolineata da Crispolti in *Storia e critica del Futurismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1986) e ampiamente illustrata dalla Salaris nella sua *Storia del futurismo* (Roma: Editori riuniti, 1985). A Giannone va il merito di aver dissotterrato significativi frammenti di un futurismo provinciale, "selvaggio", dimenticato.

Oltre alle sopradette recensioni, la raccolta include un ultimo scritto: un breve studio su "La 'contropoesia' di Bruno G. Sanzin". Sia i profili di Delle Site e Giardina che quello di Sanzin affrontano un altro aspetto trascurato della storia del futurismo: "un risveglio di vitalità di cui danno prova alcuni esponenti del movimento marinettiano" (91). I tre autori in questione sono infatti ritornati a pubblicare dopo un lungo silenzio, in coincidenza con la rinascita del futurismo all'attenzione della critica. Nell'ultima produzione di Sanzin, Giannone riscontra il persistere di una concezione "anticonformista ed eversiva nei confronti della poesia tradizionale e istituzionalizzata, proprio secondo la lezione e lo spirito più genuini del futurismo" (92). Alcuni brevi componimenti da *Prendere o lasciare* (Trieste: ed. dell'Autore, 1982) sono citati a illustrazione dei due toni fondamentali che si alternano e intrecciano nell'opera del poeta triestino: quello riflessivo, cupo di poesie che affrontano tematiche esistenziali, e quello ironico o sarcastico di epigrammatiche meditazioni su temi topici della realtà contemporanea. Qui, più che esplorare, Giannone suggerisce linee di indagine, per esempio, circa le implicazioni ideologiche della prospettiva "rovesciata" di Sanzin, o i cospicui richiami alla filosofia e alla retorica del "contro dolore" di Palazzeschi. Anche in altri saggi si desidererebbe a volte un maggiore approfondimento, sia sul piano dell'analisi

testuale che su quello della riflessione ideologica.

In generale la validità del volume di Giannone, utile sia agli studiosi di futurismo che ai non addetti al lavoro, risiede nei suoi molteplici contributi alla "microstoria" del movimento.

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Anna Meda. *Bianche statue contro il nero abisso. Il teatro dei miti in D'Annunzio e Pirandello*. Pref. Cesare Segre. Ravenna: Longo, 1993. Pp. 391.

Anna Meda's excellent study, based on her doctoral dissertation for the University of South Africa, takes its title from Pirandello's citation of Nietzsche in an interview published shortly before his death. "Nietzsche diceva che i Greci alzavano bianche statue contro il nero abisso, per nascondere. Sono finiti quei tempi. Io le scrollo invece per rivelarlo" (*Quadrivio*, Nov. 15, 1936; qtd. 198). The modern artist, Pirandello continues, must, like Faust, descend into the "infernal region of the Mothers." For Meda, this operation signifies a descent into the Jungian collective unconscious, and it is from a Jungian perspective that she interprets D'Annunzio's use of myth from the outset of his dramatic career in *La città morta*, *Fedra*, and *La figlia di Jorio*, and Pirandello's use of myth at the end of his career in *La nuova colonia*, *Lazzaro*, and *I giganti della montagna*.

For both writers, interest in the possibilities of myth in modern drama derives in part from the influence of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and more generally from the fin de siècle climate of irrationalism and revolt against bourgeois drama and the well-made play. Rejecting the developmental movement of both traditional drama and of history, D'Annunzio and Pirandello seek a dramatic space that is atemporal, ahistorical, and universal — a space that Meda identifies with the Jungian archetype.

This said, it is obvious that D'Annunzio's and Pirandello's theatrical aesthetics differ profoundly, so much so that the two have more often been contrasted than compared. D'Annunzio's idea of theater, Meda reminds us, is announced in his novel *Il fuoco* and first realized in the "modern tragedy" *La città morta*. The inspiration of the "dionysiac woman" (at the time, Duse), the fusion of the Apollonian and Dionysiac and the emergence of a modern "superhero" (from Nietzsche), the idea of a total and national theater (from Wagner), and the fusion of myth and modernity in an effort to abolish "the error of time," all contribute to D'Annunzio's theatrical theory and practice. *La città morta* is thick with intertextuality. All the myths of Mycenae, as well as that of Antigone, permeate its modern characters and their story. Leonardo, the hero as archeologist, is also, for Meda, the archetypal Jungian hero searching for secret treasures within himself through an exploration of (a regression into) the dead city which represents both the positive (protective, benevolent) and the negative (sterile, destructive) aspects of the Mother or the maternal body. Bianca Maria, the sister whom he will sacrifice, represents a different Jungian projection for each character: for Leonardo, the Mother, for Alessandro his "Anima," and for Anna, the archetypal Virgin, her positive "shadow." Leonardo's murder of his sister, a

criminal act in modern terms, represents on the mythical level the victory of man over his primitive nature.

So stated, Anna Meda's Jungian identifications may seem somewhat reductive, but her analysis is generally far more subtle than her conclusions. The rich material of *La figlia di Jorio*, with its metahistorical overlays of folkloric, Christian, and classical as well as psychological strata offer the opportunity for an often fascinating discussion of the dramatic conflict of maternal and paternal archetypes, of D'Annunzio's use of the Orphic, primordial poetic Word in theater, and once again the motif of the ritual sacrifice of woman for the benefit of the hero. Following Ernst Neumann's discussion of the matriarchal civilization of Crete opposed to the patriarchal one of Greece, she interprets *Fedra* through archetypal manifestations of the figure of the Great Mother and her son-lover.

Like D'Annunzio's, Pirandello's interest in the role of myth in theater can be traced in part to the turn of the century sense of crisis in civilization and contemporary espousal of irrationalism and of ahistoricism. For Pirandello too, the Great Mother figure, representing organic nature and instinct, seems to serve as a counterpoise to a liberal political and economic system perceived as abstract and dehumanizing. Unlike D'Annunzio, however, Pirandello rejects the use of classical myths in order to search for modern myths, that is, for modern versions of archetypal images in the attempt to restore a sense of universal values. In the three plays Pirandello himself called "myths," Meda analyzes how this search operates on the level of society ("La nuova colonia"), on the level of religion ("Lazzaro"), and on the level of art ("I giganti della montagna"). The island, in the first, represents a kind of Eden but not so much a social utopia as a condition outside of time and history, an archetypal possibility of rebirth. The "new colony" fails when the maternal archetypes are rejected for a patriarchy that incorporates the corrupting influences of civilization.

In her discussion of "Lazzaro," Meda brings up the knotty and still unresolved problem of the relation between Pirandello's espousal of fascism and his artistic production. Do the "myth" plays, as several critics have claimed, represent Pirandello's attempt to respond to the call made by Bontempelli and Bragaglia, among others, for dramatists to create fascist "myths" for the "education" of the people? Unfortunately, she sidesteps this important issue, accepting Giudice's older judgment of Pirandello as incoherent and contradictory as "piuttosto convincente." Since "myth" was a fascist buzz word in the cultural domain as well as in the prefascist intellectual climate in which D'Annunzio participated, a more thorough discussion of the fascist connection would have added an important dimension to the book. Still, her discussion of "Lazzaro" as a modern rewriting of the Biblical myth of Abraham and Isaac, centered around the hero's (Lucio's) disobedience of the father and return to the Great Mother figure (Sara), is highly suggestive.

Ending the book with Pirandello's last and incompleting play, *I giganti della montagna*, Anna Meda is able to point out the complex restating of Pirandello's major myth-themes such as the creative power of the unconscious, the opposition of the social-materialistic-patriarchal realm to the spiritual and maternal one, and the archetypal value of the mother-son couple, both in the intertextual *Figlio cambiato* and in Ilse and her dead poet. It is in fact the figure of the Great Mother and her relation to the figure of the hero, male and female, that turns out to be the most

important archetype in the comparison of D'Annunzio's and Pirandello's versions of myth in drama. In her conclusion, Meda compares D'Annunzio's configuration of this couple to the germanic myth of Wotan, who serves and receives wisdom from the Mother but also sacrifices to her his right eye, a form of spiritual castration indicative of the fear/desire of death and dissolution in incestuous union. Leonardo, who sacrifices his sister because of this fear, does not achieve the hero's complete regeneration, whereas D'Annunzio's true heroes — such as Fedra and Mila — are women who fuse the life force of the Mother with a masculine will to power in the accomplishment of a pure act of sacrifice of the self. The struggle of the Pirandellian hero, on the other hand, is with the "paternal dragon," the Law of the Terrible Father who threatens to destroy the intuitive and creative richness of the unconscious. This then explains Pirandello's valorizing of the Feminine and the apparent difference between D'Annunzio the totalizer and Pirandello the decomposer.

The conclusions and comparisons that Meda makes at the end of her book seem to raise more questions than they answer and, unlike her individual analyses of the plays, remain at a thematic level to the neglect of linguistic, poetic, and specifically dramatic textual elements. Attempts to reconcile the divergent poetics of the two writers remain somewhat unconvincing. Yet *Bianche statue* succeeds in convincing this reader, at least, of the enduring interest and suggestivity of Jungian analysis as a tool for reading literature. Thanks to Anna Meda's meticulous research and deft handling of complex material, this book will also be a precious source for Pirandello and D'Annunzio scholars.

Mary Ann Frese Witt, North Carolina State University

Andrew Hewitt. *Fascist Modernism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993. Pp. 222.

Andrew Hewitt's *Fascist Modernism* is a peculiar book. It promises more than it delivers on an important topic and left this reader both frustrated and annoyed that a good idea should come up short. Until recently, culture under fascism was systematically neglected. If any attention was given to the subject, fascist culture was identified with the monumental and traditional and certainly not with the avant-garde. Jeffrey Herf's *Reactionary Modernism* was one of the first studies to take as its central theme the coexistence in a number of important writers of an embrace of the modern with reactionary, if not overtly fascist, politics. Herf grafted a sociological perspective on his historical analysis. Hewitt in contrast uses analytical tools borrowed from recent literary and aesthetic theorists to look at the years from 1900 to 1939, during which both the avant-garde and fascism flourished, but Walter Benjamin's insight that fascism represented the aesthetization of politics and Jürgen Habermas's study of the rise and decline of the bourgeois public sphere established the overall framework within which Hewitt develops his ideas. Unlike Benjamin, who wrote within a leftist tradition that identified the avant-garde with progressive politics, Hewitt does not accept any automatic identification of modernization and Enlightenment ideals. He notes that the modernist impulse and fascism not only developed simultaneously, but also had at base some common preoccupations with technology, industrialization, and the irrational impulses inherent in mass society. More importantly, he examines how the search for solutions to these problems drew

some modernists to the multiple versions of fascism.

Hewitt has some extremely interesting insights on the evolution of the cultural avant-garde during the nineteenth-century. He describes the passage of the avant-garde from a technological elite, seen by Saint-Simon early in the century to be an emerging, progressive force in modern life, to the turn-of-the-century revolt against positivist certainties in which much of the optimism over the role of intellectuals in industrial society disappeared. The modernist artist both reflected the ambivalence within and rejection of the bourgeois liberal political order and public sphere. The refusal to accept the consequences of the new capitalist industrial order opened the way for radical aesthetic and political solutions in which the artist deliberately assumed the role of outsider. By the end of the century this affirmation of individuality moved from decadence and the social ideal of the dandy to pre-fascism.

Maurice Barrès exemplifies this passage from decadence to the development of the new nationalism during the 1890s. Barrès's career embodied the transition from decadence and artistic hermeticism to Boulangist politics, the anti-Dreyfus cause, and extreme nationalism. It was a process in which the artistic sensibility becomes aware of and frightened by the masses, but, at the same time, seeks through an essentially aesthetic vision of politics to shape and dominate the impressionable crowd. Hewitt chooses Filippo Tommaso Marinetti to illustrate the passage from aesthetic revolt to nationalism and fascism, but a quite different approach would be necessary to do justice to this subject. The problem is that Marinetti is viewed in total isolation from Italian culture and the larger futurist movement. Hewitt uses only a small fraction of Marinetti's artistic production and nothing from other Futurists or from major contemporaries like Papini, Prezzolini, Soffici, Amendola, and Jahier. But he does at least clarify the authoritarianism and traditionalism lurking behind Marinetti's pre-1914 cultural and political positions, and leaves no doubt that Marinetti's ideas of power and of social hierarchies were perfectly in tune with those of fascism.

Unfortunately, one arrives at the end of *Fascist Modernism* with a very uncertain notion of the relation between modernist culture and fascism. In part, this failure is due to an almost complete lack of any historical frame of reference despite many sweeping generalizations about history, economics, and society. But much of the problem derives from a writing style that seemingly cultivates obscurity and opaqueness as positive values. The text is replete with curious sentences like this one: "It is only a decadent decadence that could possibly realize itself in practice — and yet, as a decadence within the very category of the decadent itself, such a decadent decadence might indeed be the purest form of decadence" (77). One has the uncomfortable sense that this book was written, not to be read or understood by any reasonably literate general audience, but rather to show how bright and *au courant* about fashionable literary theory the author is. The result is a missed opportunity by an obviously intelligent scholar. A far better treatment of the subject of modernism and fascism can be found in Walter Adamson's excellent collective biography of the 1880s generation, *Avant-garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Harvard, 1993). Adamson goes directly to the literary and historical sources, whereas Hewitt writes almost exclusively about those who have written about the problem. Given the scarcity of studies in English about early twentieth century Italian culture, Hewitt's decision is regrettable.

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Unspeakable Women. Selected Short Stories Written by Italian Women During Fascism. Trans., introd., afterword Robin Pickering-Iazzi. New York: The Feminist Press at the City U of New York, 1993.

It was with pleasure and relief that I read *Unspeakable Women* by Robin Pickering-Iazzi, a collection of sixteen short stories by Italian women writers during the Fascist era. To know that these writers could make their voices heard in such an oppressive time of Italian history is a refreshing and delightful surprise. My understanding of women living through Fascism, in fact, derived either from gloomy stories heard at family reunions that haunted my mind as a child, or from writings such as Piero Meldini's "Sposa e madre esemplare." The thesis of this first substantial research on fascist politics and women written in 1975 was accepted and developed by most feminists, who stressed how women, as the title of the book points out, were praised only as exemplary wives and mothers.

However, by stressing that fascist propaganda considered women either faithful vestal virgins or prolific mothers, these publications put aside and forgot many contradictions at work in the regime, such as the astonishing failure of the demographic campaign. Victoria de Grazia's *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945* remains the landmark work that challenges the monolithic image of women during the fascist regime by proposing a more complex one. De Grazia, a history professor at Columbia University, suggests that Fascism provided enough space, if only subtly, for women to participate actively in social life, provided that they were first committed to their family life. Tradition and "emancipation" co-existed, since women were required to be devoted to their families but at the same time to their country. In this way women could share men's interests.

In her extensive "Introduction" to *Unspeakable Women*, Pickering-Iazzi, following the path inaugurated by De Grazia (whose work is properly recognized), tells how women, even if discouraged from both studying and working, began to enter the male-dominated disciplines and manifested their desire to work and become more independent. In the rather hostile and unsupportive atmosphere of fascist dictatorship, women writers, instead of being frozen by fear or indecision, showed their determination and willfulness by publishing poetry and fiction in literary journals, in newspapers or in the successful women press. Pickering-Iazzi admits to having been herself taken by surprise by the determination of these writers: "With . . . the especially patriarchal and repressive character of the regime in mind it may seem improbable for many readers — as it did for me — that Italian women exercised their power as writers to speak of themselves in ways never voiced before" (1). She is correct in stressing the novelty of the topics of the short stories selected. First of all, they can be considered *controcorrente*, since their authors, unlike male writers, such as Pirandello or Moravia, did not characterize female protagonists as tempresses, wives or mothers. They also distanced themselves from some women writers contemporary to them, such as Liala, who wrote an exclusively escapist fiction. However, the reader should not expect obvious attacks to the fascist dictatorship written in bold and self-asserting prose. To be sure, hardly ever can any reference to the political situation be found in the narrative. The voice that emerges is soft-

spoken, modest, apparently submissive, yet the issues expressed are quite explosive.

The sixteen short stories are written by Italian women writers. While some of them are present in the histories and anthologies of Italian literature, such as Grazia Deledda, Gianna Manzini and Ada Negri, others have been erased from any records, such as Pia Rimini, Marinella Lodi and Maddalena Crispolti. All these writers, the ones admitted to the canon as well as those excluded from it, voiced concerns that are extremely relevant today. Marinella Lodi in "Man and Death" tells in the first person narrative the story of a thirteen-year-old girl who wants to gain freedom from her parents, but is still unable to deal with her own feelings. Her first substantial emotional experience takes place during the wake of a deceased family member, when her cousin's husband tries to molest her. "I was the one being humiliated. I was suffering. . . . I was alone and in agony" (36). In a somewhat morbid finale, the girl confesses that after having been confronted with the rules, power, passions of man and death, she prefers the latter. A twenty-year-old girl is the protagonist of "Sensitivity" by Amalia Guglielminetti. Arianna is a beautiful girl who has been engaged several times but never married because she feels she has always been considered an "object," a mere ornament by her partners. When the narrator meets her again after two years, she discovers that Arianna is now married to a man who is able to love her for her spiritual qualities and is not intimidated by her intelligence and sensitivity. In an unexpected dénouement Arianna explains why this man can appreciate her for all her qualities but her beauty. In "Fog" Maria Luisa Astaldi, a professor of English and American literature, denounces the isolation and emargination of a learned woman. She offers a charming portrait of Miss Lucia, who is a graceful schoolteacher considered a scatterbrain by the people in her village and who has a passion for flowers and the countryside in the tradition of the British "spinster" heroines. Miss Lucia's most intimate wish is to marry and, upon encouragement by the mother of her students, she buys the fabric for her wedding dress, even though she has no fiancé. Her desire to become socially acceptable through marriage leads her only to madness and eventually to death. The dichotomy of education or work versus marriage is reinforced by the words of a man of the village: "We found piles of books in her house. She read so much she ruined her brain" (57).

These are only a few of the stimulating stories concerned with women's personal experiences, tragedies and losses (one of them is narrated from a male perspective). Through their fictional accounts these women writers put forward all those questions that some decades later would be developed and discussed by feminists: the pain and joys of motherhood, marriage as oppression, escapism through identification with fictional characters, and old age. In spite of their modernity and freshness, these writings were dismissed as personal by contemporary critics, supporters of the "arte pura," since the universal was in vogue. The sixteen short stories selected were published on the cultural page of the nationally distributed newspapers *Il corriere della sera*, *La stampa* and *Il giornale d'Italia*, covering the period from the mid-twenties to the late thirties. They lived, however, a short Indian summer, for although they enjoyed the attention of a receptive audience they did not survive the test of time and were never republished. Some of the authors were completely cast aside.

Pickering-Iazzi's major achievement is to release these women writers and their intriguing short stories from oblivion. Furthermore, in her well thought-out

"Introduction" she presents a social and political framework that encourages a new perspective on the condition of women in Fascist times. She also raises some vexing questions in the "Afterword." According to her, the writings of women in the twenties and thirties were suppressed by the postwar critical establishment, namely, the neorealistic generation that wanted to do away with any semblance of conservative ideology.

Caught in this double bind (on the one hand the fascist critics accused them of naive "autobiographism"; on the other, the neorealistic critics saw in their writings only personal and sentimental art whereas they encouraged only committed art), these women writers became "unspeakable women." Through this multi-faceted title, the author may be suggesting that these women are subjects that cannot be spoken about, and consequently have become unwilling or unable to speak. Yet, even though they were by and large omitted from the literary canon, these writers undermined the fascist agenda and through their characters uttered those aspirations and desires that, even if suffocated, have been able to re-emerge in recent years and be expressed to a much greater extent.

In spite of the catchy title that intends to denounce the unjust destiny of the women writers in the collection, obviously Pickering-Iazzi wants to underscore women's courage and achievements rather than the negative aspects of their condition during the dictatorship. The short stories she has selected have as protagonists mostly women of the middle class, who usually study, work in offices, run small shops, or are well-off enough to have a housekeeper. (The only exception is Leila in "Beyond the Labyrinth," a young woman born outside of wedlock, who works in a cotton mill; her mother, however, owns a store and her father makes a good living.) Why have peasant and indigent women been left out? Did they not actively participate in this *ante litteram* consciousness-raising, as spectators if not as actors? Did they not read those newspapers where the short stories were published, or, more poignantly still, were they literate at all? It is true that the women's press developed at this time, but the illiteracy rate among women was still very high, nonetheless.

In her solid critical introduction, Pickering-Iazzi should perhaps have provided a more detailed landscape of the Italian readership in the early twentieth century in order to give a more precise historical perspective. She repeatedly insists on the increasing popularity of women writers, but her statements are always rather vague: "In the varied media utilized by women in the twenties and thirties, more women's texts were being published and read than ever before" (102). When she reveals her astonishment at the discovery of so large a number of women writings, her information is vague: "I was not prepared to uncover hundreds of short stories written by a variety of renowned and popular women authors" (XII). Did Italian newspapers offer publications by women in every one of their daily issues? How did these publications vary throughout the regime as censorship became stricter and stricter?

Reflecting on the evolution of Fascist dictatorship leads inevitably to another consideration concerning the arrangement of the short stories. Pickering-Iazzi does not order them chronologically, as one would expect, although she provides a chronological listing of the short stories at the beginning of the book, but arranges them according to the age of the protagonists: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. According to her, provided with such a structure, each group of short stories shares a similar topic, since it is devoted to the same period in life, a somewhat

dubious assumption. She describes and justifies briefly this structure in the "Introduction" ("This manner of organization was suggested by my reading of women's texts and of writings by Fascist exponents of their time" 15). While this arrangement might be more suitable to a collection of short stories by the same writer, the editor here could also have analyzed how women writers responded to fascism. I could not but wonder whether their themes and interests changed throughout the twenty years of fascist rule, or whether their language and style were affected by historical changes.

Pickering-Iazzi emphasizes how women challenged the canon not only through concentrating on personal themes but also through the use of colloquial language, which their contemporaries often perceived as a lack of stylistic elaboration. In the English translation, however, the short stories seem to assume an inaccurate uniformity. The style peculiar to each author is often lost, such as the rich and elaborate "prosa d'arte" of Gianna Manzini or the suggestive "realismo poetico" of Grazia Deledda. Another collection of women's writings, Martha King's *New Italian Women: a Collection of Short Fiction*, displays the same loss in character and freshness of language. In the short story "The Courage of Women" by Anna Banti, for example, some disused *toscanismi* have been translated in a flat contemporary English. Thus, the reader is not given the opportunity to appreciate the individual style of each author. Nonetheless, these translations are gladly received in the Anglo-Saxon world, since they help make Italian women writers, both popular and obscure, known to American readers.

It is remarkable that these short stories have never been published in Italy after their first appearance. Thus *Unspeakable Women* should be an invitation to the discovery of books kept on dusty shelves and to continuing research on women's studies. The words of the protagonist in Gianna Manzini's "A White Cloud" — "My mother, me, my little girl . . . : a group, a force" — should invite us to reflect on the importance of tradition, solidarity and cooperation among women.

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Renate Holub. *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 247.

Renate Holub's recent *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism* is a serious, thoughtful, and optimistic study that seeks to engage Gramsci on the terms and in the terminology of recent critical theory. Marxist aesthetics, with a nod to political philosophy, forms the unifying thematics that allow Holub to move from modernism to the postmodern, from Gramsci to Lyotard and Foucault. With remarkable fluidity (and not inconsiderable style) she synthesizes major developments in twentieth-century Marxist philosophy and in linguistics, all the while keeping literary concerns conspicuous, a rather distinctive characteristic for an enquiry of Gramsci. Holub aims to arrive at an "appreciation of the complexity of the *Prison Notebooks*, of Gramsci's conceptual framework . . . which squarely situates him in the context not only of modernist problematics, but also tangentially — albeit inadvertently on his part — of some postmodernist problematics as well."

What results are strategies for responding to, among others, the following: How does Gramsci compare to Lukács on aesthetic questions? What is the most profitable means of analyzing Gramsci vis-à-vis the Frankfurt School? In what way can Gramsci illuminate postmodernism? With this kind of backgrounding we learn that despite the prodigious number of studies on Gramsci currently available, we still have much to learn.

The study is divided into three parts of unequal length: a brief introductory section, followed by "From Realism to Modernism," and finally the conclusion, "Beyond the Modern, Beyond the Postmodern." The middle section is the longest and here Holub's structuring of the material is altogether original and instructive. The sharp and literary focus here yields graceful comparisons between Gramsci and such critics as Lukács, Bloch and Brecht, and the Russian linguist Volosinov. Manzoni, Pirandello, and Dante represent the three vectors of literary concern. Reading Gramsci's Manzoni against Lukács's (Gramsci rejects while Lukács ultimately accepts as historically genuine Manzoni's condescension toward the socio-economic underclass in *The Betrothed*), Holub persuasively illuminates the intersection of Gramsci's aesthetics with his political agenda. (She also anticipates here the transition in the following section to the practice of critical ethics in postmodernism.) It is not a question of canonicity for Gramsci so much as one of the function of aesthetics in ideology. As Holub says, "To create a democratic future meant for Gramsci not to keep insisting on great classical literatures of the past, on the great masterpieces of high culture of the western world. Rather, what it meant was to understand what the ordinary common people liked to read what they read" (66). Unsurprisingly, Gramsci's entries on Pirandello's theater in the *Prison Notebooks* reveal a similar set of concerns. In turning to an analysis of the theater, Gramsci's focus (and Holub's along with it) is trained to a greater degree on the participatory nature of artistic production, as opposed to the more formally structured nature of the novel. Gramsci welcomed Pirandello's thoroughly modern (and modernist) theatrical agenda and felt that the plays "rupture and explode the audience's anticipations by introducing an unsettling paradox between 'normalcy' and 'non-normalcy' which resist emotional identification while simultaneously requiring active participation" (96). The last chapter in the second part, entitled "Phenomenology, linguistics, hegemony" is pivotal, since its concentration on the linguistic component of Gramsci's notes on Dante builds a self-conscious bridge from the modern to the postmodern. The juxtaposition of Gramsci to Volosinov is inspired and makes a significant contribution to tracking Gramsci's interest in linguistics from his university days to the time of its appearance in the *Notebooks*. Consideration of the full complement of literary genres — prose, theater, and poetry — serves to round and complete this section, rendering it thorough indeed.

Towards its end the study seems a bit truncated. Although no less well-researched or documented, the third part lacks the spaciousness of its antecedent, consequently making the study seem slightly uncalibrated. Signalling a switch in critical mode from one of "production" to one of "information," which is coeval with the postmodern period, is extremely suggestive and may have benefitted from more attention. The last section, which stands "in lieu of a conclusion," is perhaps the most challenging, particularly to and for feminist criticism. In this section, an exploratory consideration of the intersection between feminism, Foucault and

Gramsci, Holub flags the problem of consent, which composes the foundation of Gramsci's and Foucault's theories of power and hegemony. Holub handily untangles the complicated network of state apparatus, domination, exploitation — "power" *tout court*, as delineated in the writings of Gramsci and Foucault. On this count the importance of Holub's contribution cannot be stressed enough; despite the obvious connections between them, there are in fact startlingly few analyses made of the affinities between Gramsci's and Foucault's work. (And of those, it should be added, none that might be fitted under a feminist rubric, making Holub's examination unique indeed.) Domination, according to Foucault and Gramsci, is made possible only by and with the consent of the dominated. Here Holub seems much more sanguine about the possibilities the Foucauldian system yields for feminist issues than do some feminist critics. It has been suggested, for instance, that the implications of rape — predicated on the absence of consent and the illustration *par excellence* of the irrefutable plight of women in patriarchy — impugn Foucault's theories and reduce the viability his system has for feminism. Might this not also signify in a reading of Gramsci's thoughts on the "woman question"?

Antonio Gramsci has much to offer readers of Gramsci who are interested in seeing how he bears up under a *fin-de-siècle* analysis that uses literary topics and concerns as its criteria. Holub's prose is always fresh and lean, making it lively and engaging reading. Throughout, the notes and bibliography are rigorously thorough and current. *Antonio Gramsci* will appeal to a wide audience, from those who make Gramsci scholarship a habit to those interested in seeing how Gramsci might be considered while bearing in mind more recent theoretical developments.

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Ugo Betti. *Il filo verde. Poesie*. Ed. Luigi Fontanella. Camerino: Mierma, 1993.

Con le celebrazioni del primo centenario della nascita di Ugo Betti giunge all'attenzione dei cultori di poesia una preziosa antologia della poesia bettiana curata da Luigi Fontanella, che ha anche scritto l'esauriente prefazione al volume.

Essa include un'eccellente scelta di liriche tratte da quattro raccolte: *Il re penseroso* (1922), *Canzonette. La morte* (1932), *Uomo e donna* (1937) e le postume *Ultime liriche* (1957) coprendo così un periodo di ben trenta anni della vita del poeta-drammaturgo. In queste poesie trova spicco, sin dagli esordi, uno stile tutto personale che al di là delle ovvie influenze letterarie del primo Novecento rinviene nella fabulazione fresca e spontanea dello spunto fiabesco la norma della più profonda aspirazione: "Vedi, bambina?/ La notte dai cupi forzieri / ha levato i gioielli /più belli / e s'è ingemmata come una regina!" ("Le stelle" 20).

Si afferma così, come suggerisce Fontanella nell'introduzione (7), non tanto una simbologia interiore quanto una volontà di fantasia che aiuta l'autore a trascendere la brutalità del mondano. La condizione del *puer* e la sua relativa modalità percettiva assumono difatti un ruolo di contrappunto nell'iter poetico ed esistenziale di Betti rivelando sostanzialmente un profondo desiderio d'innocenza adamitica.

Questa rivendicazione psicologica da cui procede l'autore viene subito a confrontarsi/scontrarsi con l'essenza drammatica del contingente riconoscendo nella trasfigurazione cosmica di spazio e di tempo il proprio destino di morte: "Ed ecco gli astri cadevano, foglie / tetre; il bagliore dei mondi era spento:/ vedemmo i soli e il tempo /succhiati, pula al vento;/ li ingoiava, come una notte / che si dilata, la morte" ("Canto di operai", 63).

Proseguendo in questa direzione, il Betti maturo di *Uomo e donna* sprofonda nell'ambito cosmogonico-metafisico ed alterna ad un diffuso senso di *spleen* esistenziale una speranza visionaria che agogna una reintegrazione cosmica: "Così tremando sopra / un tenebroso tenero alito passano, / atomi illuminati, i mondi. Da essi inquieto, / quasi in ascolto contempla / l'uomo lo splendore creato" ("Vincere la morte", 76). Con questo titolo "Vincere la morte" si rivela, oltre ad un ovvio apporto di stilemi onofriani (*Vincere il drago* è il titolo di una raccolta di Arturo Onofri del 1928), l'adesione di Ugo Betti ad un'intensa vocazione poetica che, come nell'esempio di Onofri, proietta la problematica etica della *quête* dell'eterno nella dimensione naturale dell'esistenza.

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Scrittori, tendenze letterarie e conflitto delle poetiche in Italia (1960-1990). Ed. Rocco Capozzi and Massimo Ciavolella. Ravenna: Longo, 1993. Pp. 224.

Il volume raccoglie una parte degli atti del convegno, dallo stesso titolo, tenuto presso la University of Toronto nell'autunno del 1991, e comprende diciannove tra saggi e interventi che affondano colpi di sonda nella non facile "eredità del presente" con la quale la letteratura italiana degli ultimi trent'anni sembra circondarci, già chiedendo una sistemazione, un *assessment* critico che tempi più prudenti avrebbero rimandato alla generazione futura. Dico che è la stessa letteratura a chiedere in qualche modo una tale sistemazione perché mi sembra che sia ormai difficile distinguere tra i problemi di cui soffre l'istituzione letteraria (comprendente sia la critica che l'accademia) e i problemi di cui soffre la letteratura, in particolar modo quella italiana, che non sembra si stia avvicinando alla scadenza del secolo nel pieno delle sue forze. Se poi la scadenza del secolo importa ancora qualcosa, e non è ancora un pensare per categorie temporali "moderne". Porre l'inizio della postmodernità a quarant'anni fa, cioè più o meno agli inizi dell'età della televisione e dell'informatica, come fa Romano Luperini all'inizio del suo saggio introduttivo (*Bilancio di un trentennio letterario e ipotesi sul presente*), è appunto un pensare in modo ancora "moderno", cioè secondo scansioni temporali determinate da mutamenti strutturali e sovrastrutturali riconosciuti da una posterità (cioè noi) a sua volta "creata" da tali mutamenti. D'altra parte, obietterebbe Luperini, il fatto di vivere in una condizione postmoderna non implica lo sposarne l'ideologia (che è poi appunto l'indistinzione programmatica delle categorie temporali e dei rapporti di produzione). Per Luperini, chi sceglie tale ideologia sceglie con ciò di essere postmodernista, confinandosi così in una nebbia epistemologica dalla quale è facile cadere nelle grandi trappole

dell'“irrazionalismo”, del “misticismo” o dell'acquiescenza ai correnti rapporti di produzione. Ed è ovvio che Luperini, per conto suo, scelga un approccio critico rigorosamente distinto dall'ideologia postmodernista. Ma ci sembra che nella sua analisi resti una contraddizione: se la postmodernità non è solo un'ideologia (il postmodernismo) ma anche davvero una fase nuova (una nuova condizione permessa dai fattori sopra menzionati: ruolo dei media e rivoluzione elettronica), come si potrà giudicarla con una impostazione così schiettamente “moderna”? Non è come voler giudicare la rivoluzione francese dal punto di vista della monarchia illuminata? Non si stanno forse manifestando qua e là, proprio grazie alla condizione postmoderna o comunque la si voglia chiamare, nuove “figure della coscienza” (per usare un tropo classicamente dialettico e che quindi ribadisce fiducia nella storia), che hanno bisogno di essere riconosciute nella loro inedita (se è inedita) fenomenicità?

Devo lasciare la domanda senza risposta perché questa è una recensione e non un progetto di ricerca (e ricerche simili durano una vita). Del resto, non è detto che tali nuove figure si siano già manifestate nella letteratura italiana contemporanea, e il saggio di Luperini da cui sono partito per questa riflessione è molto chiaro ed esauriente nel tracciare in pochi tratti l'involuzione del moderno e l'evoluzione del postmoderno nelle lettere degli ultimi trent'anni. Solo che il suo punto di vista rigorosamente anti-postmodernista lo rende a mio parere eccessivamente severo con chi aveva davvero cercato di rintracciare delle figure nuove, se non della coscienza almeno della letteratura. Dopo aver concluso che Calvino ha rinunciato alla sfida al labirinto da lui stesso proposta negli anni Sessanta, Luperini conclude che “l'elevazione del presente ad una superficie aerea e gradevole e questo recupero del valore-letteratura come puro piacere”, che si ritroverebbe nelle *Lezioni americane*, è “il segno dell'avvicinamento di Calvino al postmodernismo” (11). Ma forse Calvino non aveva rinunciato a sfidare il labirinto. Forse aveva solo concluso che il labirinto era cambiato, si era trasformato in una rete luminosa, elettronica, immateriale, non per questo meno efficace o a tratti spaventevole, ma che la scrittura doveva affrontare con armi adeguate, facendosi agile, veloce e, in una parola già abusata, leggera. E leggero non significa debole: chi è leggero può rifugiarsi là dove l'artiglieria pesante non arriva. Non so se Calvino si stesse avvicinando al postmodernismo. In ogni caso, abbiamo il rammarico di non sapere cosa sarebbe stato capace di ricavarne.

Ho dedicato spazio al saggio di Luperini perché è quello che dà il tono all'intera raccolta. Ma ve ne sono altri che aspirano a un discorso panoramico, come *La narrativa italiana sperimentale del secondo Novecento* di Renato Barilli, *Il doppio movimento della poesia. Sul dibattito intorno alla letteratura in Italia negli anni '70 e '80* di Sandro Briosi, e *Apocalittici e integrati nell'industria culturale postmoderna* di Rocco Capozzi, che chiude il volume. Barilli propone una suddivisione degli scrittori italiani degli ultimi trent'anni secondo il registro linguistico da essi scelto (alto, medio o basso) concludendo che tra i non numerosi aspiranti al titolo di nipotini dell'ingegnere (molti giovani scrittori preferiscono un più confortevole registro medio) forse solo Aldo Busi ha le carte per richiederlo. Briosi vede un pericolo nelle tendenze postmoderne verso l'estetismo, il misticismo e il formalismo che si sono fatte strada sull'onda della crisi del dopo-sessantotto, e rinviene invece una progettualità positiva nel tentativo di elaborare una “scrittura materialistica” che ha trovato un punto di riferimento nel Gruppo '93. Ma se qualcuno tra i nuovi poeti italiani fosse davvero un mistico, quella non sarebbe un'accusa, sarebbe un

complimento. Senza misticismo o una frequentazione del mistico non ci sarebbe buona parte della migliore poesia che abbiamo la fortuna di leggere. L'accusa che si può fare a chi ostenta velleità mistiche è casomai quella di essere solo un velleitario. Del resto Briosi è critico troppo fine per non accorgersi che i recenti progetti di scrittura materialistica ed allegorica sono ancora troppo progetti e troppo poco scrittura, e al termine del suo saggio propone infatti di riconsiderare, accanto al ruolo dell'allegoria, anche quello della metafora. Capozzi fa il punto sullo stato del rapporto letteratura/industria, facendo notare come esso non si sia esaurito con gli anni Sessanta, ma anzi si sia rinnovato e trasferito nel dibattito sul postmoderno e sia poi ricomparso nelle opere dell'ultimo Volponi. Capozzi propone di raccogliere la sfida di Volponi al postmoderno, e sostiene che è ancora compito degli intellettuali "organizzare l'industria del postmoderno all'interno della società consumistica e massmediale" secondo una visione critica che non si riveli però falsamente umanistica, ideologica o elitaria (221).

Gli altri saggi si occupano rispettivamente di Balestrini (W. Anselmi), di Gadda (R. S. Dombroski), di Fortini (W. Krynski), di Sciascia (M. Kuitunen), di Manganelli (G. Menechella), di Porta (J. Picchione), di Pazzi (F. Ricci), dell'India vista da Moravia e Pasolini (P. Rumble), di Zanzotto (S. Ramat), e di Lamberto Pignotti (C. Federici), che è anche presente come autore di un intervento insieme a Biancamaria Frabotta e a Francesco Leonetti. Gustoso il paragone, stabilito da Linda Hutcheon, tra il *Pendolo* di Eco e i cicli di fantascienza umoristica e "olistica" di Douglas Adams, e particolarmente stimolante la lettura di Malerba proposta da Francesco Guardiani, in cui *Il protagonista* e *Le pietre volanti* vengono accostati a due piccoli classici di un maestro del postmoderno americano come Donald Barthelme (*At the End of the Mechanical Age* e *The Dead Father*), in nome di una comune e innegabile risonanza macluaniana.

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Gian-Paolo Biasin. *The Flavors of Modernity: Food and the Novel.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

Food in novels is both the same as food in any other context and different from food in any other context. "Fables" about food will make sense out of the world and thus be central to human culture and the anthropological discipline. For example, alimentary taboos and the stories surrounding them are related to conceptual boundaries and societal classifications. Lévi-Strauss made the famous observation that food is good to think. Food and fantasy are inseparable in some way, and their connections form the basis of the alimentary studies of Piero Camporesi, whose works on food have been widely translated and reviewed in the United States and have provided an important inspiration for Gian-Paolo Biasin. When it comes to literature, the fantastic or metaphorical significance of the culinary functions in particular ways. It is Gian-Paolo Biasin's contention that "literary use of food is tropological, inherent in the very structure of the culinary sign and of the verbal sign" (20). Biasin teaches us that when writers write about food they are also creating a discourse on the

literariness of their work (11), on metanarrativity (27). This intersection of the culinary sign and metanarrativity (or, more broadly, the metapoetic) creates for readers of novels the sensation that Biasin terms the "flavor of modernity."

Biasin's volume concentrates on the nineteenth and twentieth century novel in Italy. It argues convincingly the importance of the relation innovation/tradition in both culinary "genealogy" and the literary text, which in fact incorporates culinary genealogy as part of its thematic repertoire and even as part of its internal structure. Biasin in his introduction gives us a fascinating account of the importance of Pellegrino Artusi's cookbooks to the Italian national identity, thus introducing the notion of culinary hegemonies in the form of "invented tradition." Camporesi coined the term "gustemi" to describe Artusi's "code of national identification," and Giorgio Manganelli surmised that Artusi's recipes "gained the housewives' hearts. . . . And so he invaded the womanish, maternal center of the Italian unconscious" (9). Biasin frames his literary analysis broadly in that he considers the ideological and anthropological significance of food. His gathering of sources from Camporesi to Marcel Mauss and Mary Douglas, from Manzoni to Calvino, is formidable. The richness lies fundamentally, however, in the rigor of his comparative approach.

Each chapter deals with a single Italian author, and the chapters are arranged historically, yet numerous works contemporary to the foregrounded author are brought to bear on the analysis. Each chapter also has a theoretical goal. For example, Biasin illustrates how Manzoni uses alimentary connotations to bolster realistic descriptions and thus the mimetic function of narrative. There is more to the effort for Manzoni than good micro-history, more to it than getting the right foods in the right mouths (*polenta* for the poor, capons for the rich). The narrative function of culinary details artfully reinforces particular character traits. Biasin outlines Renzo's lack of appreciation for meatballs and his spare culinary pleasure in one scene which contrasts another one where excess reigns. Manzoni gives us various sides to Renzo's character in this way, yet he is also generating a story of conflicts, generating the narrative. Food gives the narrative a pattern. Culinary discourse in Manzoni functions to narrate class conflict, since famine plays a large part in the narrative of *I promessi sposi* and is juxtaposed to the anthropological mythologem which represents the "Land of Cockaigne" or "Cuccagna" (31). In general, food references aid Manzoni in his indictment of an overbearing nobility which reduces meals to "mere occasions for displaying power, reaffirming hierarchies, preparing abuses, and demonstrating arbitrariness" (38).

While the same kinds of statements might be made about Giovanni Verga's *I Malavoglia*, the texture of that novel differs radically from Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*. Biasin finds that the alimentary referents in Verga contribute to a "textual weaving that has little to do with realism" (47). Although the repetition of culinary signs gives the narrative a rhythm, their arrangement is "modernist" because alimentary referents tend to take on metaphorical meanings which are so carefully woven as to become virtually poetic. Verga's use of alimentary signs is specifically Symbolist in its creation of a paradoxical "impersonal" language which creates reverberating voices meant to be archetypal (51). The alimentary semantic area tends in general to metaphorization and the rhetorically refined. The sea which "devours" fishermen is one such creation in Verga (48).

Comparisons multiply over three central chapters as Biasin takes up the case of

Gabriele D'Annunzio and uncovers the fact that the protagonists of *Il piacere* do not eat much, or better that D'Annunzio does not describe their eating much, opting for the symbolics of tea ceremonies and in general the contact of liquids and lips, mouths and tears. The characters do some biting into oranges, for instance ("mordevamo la polpa succulenta come si morde il pane"), yet how different the connotation of the sign "orange" is from the figurations found in Vittorini's *Conversazione in Sicilia*, where eating an orange is an act of ravenous desperation born of a citrus glut (63). Oranges are all there is to eat and there is no money for any other food. Gastronomy and sensuality occupy Biasin's analysis of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *Il Gattopardo*. Biasin uncovers there a fusion of the lexical areas of eros and food which drives home Lampedusa's notions of class and national "wisdom." Carlo Emilio Gadda's accumulations of food structures in *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana* functions in such a way that "accumulation (of clues, proofs, causes) is the supporting structure . . . of the entire police investigation (which is a cognitive inquiry) throughout the novel" (96).

Biasin's reading of food and its metaphorical constructs reaches its apex in chapter 6, on Italo Calvino's *Sotto il sole giaguaro*. He traces with method an internal development within Calvino's novels based on alimentary discourse, looking at fantastic inventions such as the lunar milk in the *Cosmicomiche* and the impersonal but telltale kitchen in "Se una notte . . ." He writes: "I shall focus on all the primary functions of food that the story analyzes, from the satisfaction of desire to the possibility of transgression, from the narrative sign to the cognitive tool used to outline the problematic relations among self, others, and the world (or among subject, nature, and history)" (98). It turns out that the theme of incorporation is crucial to Calvino's entire corpus so that "gastronomy fuses anthropology and eroticism within itself, while the underlying discourse probes the nature of literature" (98-99). It is Biasin's contention, and he supports it brilliantly, that Calvino attempts to represent an attitude to the world which is "less arrogant and violent than logocentrism" (116). Ironically, it is through an analysis of cannibalism as it appears in *Sotto il sole giaguaro* that Biasin makes his case that such an attitude has to be related to a certain sense of the sacred, and even to a "gourmet appreciation of human flesh" (Biasin is quoting Peggy Reeves Sanday on divine hunger), a kind of self-awareness and a sense of morality about the relations of self and other.

Hunger demands a chapter of its own in this volume on food in the novel, and Biasin couples hunger and the concentration camp in his final chapter on Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo*. Not too surprisingly, his attention must turn to the dehumanizing aspects of Nazi camp policy, the turning of men into beasts who "feed" rather than eat. This final chapter hints at Biasin's own moral discourse about food. If the human/beast duality underlies discourse about food, may not dehumanizing discourse underlie more of our daily life than we may imagine, even playing a role in intolerant behaviors we have yet to recognize in ourselves? He leaves us wondering not only about such contemporary phenomena as "Eurocuisine" but also about the great shifting of cycles and patterns in ordinary life in contemporary society.

Centro Internazionale di Studi Lombardi. Lo scrittore Carlo Emilio Gadda moralista lombardo: dall'ambiente familiare d'origine alla fortuna della sua opera in Europa. Oggiono: Edizioni del C.E.I.S.L.O., 1994. Pp. 181.

Il presente volume raccoglie gli Atti del Congresso su Carlo Emilio Gadda tenutosi nell'ottobre del 1993 a Santa Maria la Vite-Olginate. Il lavoro propone, in maniera originale e stimolante, un approccio critico all'ermeneutica gaddiana attraverso una serie di interventi volti ad esplorare l'evolversi problematico della poetica dello scrittore lombardo.

In queste pagine infatti, come si evince chiaramente già dal titolo stesso del libro, si percorre un itinerario all'interno di una polarità diacronica che si definisce appunto tra i limiti opposti dell'"eden dell'infanzia" (7) fino a raggiungere una "dilatazione oltre l'esistenza" (7). Un'analisi dunque pregevole, ma allo stesso tempo ambiziosa, che tenta di interpretare la complessità della scrittura gaddiana cercandone i motivi e le dinamiche di fondo nell'ambito di una dimensione spazio-temporale che parte dall'esplorazione minuziosa ed attenta dell'ambiente familiare d'origine per arrivare alla fortuna della sua opera in Europa.

I primi interventi propongono perciò, grazie anche al materiale inedito fornito dai familiari dello scrittore, una serie di elementi chiarificanti relativi alla formazione culturale e morale di Gadda ed all'influenza che l'ambiente natio ebbe nell'evolversi drammatico della sua tormentata personalità e nel definirsi complesso della sua scrittura. Il saggio di Giuseppe Podestà rievoca, ad esempio, la figura intellettuale ed umana di due personaggi del parentado gaddiano — Carlo Testori De Capitani e Giuseppe Gadda — cercando di mettere in risalto quanto la loro attiva partecipazione nel sociale ed il loro impegno politico e civile durante il Risorgimento, costituiscano in effetti un punto di riferimento determinante ed imprescindibile nella formazione culturale ed artistica dello scrittore. Se da un lato Giovanni Antonio Osnago Gadda esamina, inoltre, attraverso l'esplorazione geografica dei luoghi nati — prestando particolare attenzione alla villa di Rògeno — le eventuali concatenazioni tra la serenità stimolante di quell'atmosfera solitaria e le ispirazioni creative dell'artista, Giuditta Podestà ravvisa invece nelle relazioni "a livello affettivo e semantico" (29) di Carlo Emilio con la sorella Clara e la cugina Luisa "la linea sublime dei rapporti dello scrittore con la famiglia al femminile" (29). L'ineludibilità di tali connessioni semantiche tra la poetica gaddiana e le sue tormentate vicende esistenziali trovano un'ulteriore elaborazione critica nell'analisi freudiana di un passo del *Pasticciaccio* proposta da Elio Gioanola che si sofferma in particolare su "quell'autentica metafora ossessiva" (71) della scrittura gaddiana rappresentata dal topazio.

In questo ambito risultano anche molto stimolanti le osservazioni di Carlo Viganò che offre degli interessanti spunti di ricerca, grazie ad un'attenta interpretazione lacaniana del "dolore" di Gadda; secondo l'autore del saggio infatti lo scrittore riesce, proprio tramite il suo lavoro e la sua produzione poetica, "a soggettivare e quindi a trasformare una condizione di sofferenza" (65). Interpretazioni queste che inducono il lettore a riflettere ulteriormente sulla complessità dell'opera gaddiana e sulle difficoltà interpretative di una scrittura che vede convergere in maniera multiforme "plurilinguismo", "visualità" (159) e "incompiutezza", nel

tentativo costante di definizione di una poetica che rappresenta le conflittualità e le contraddizioni irrisolte dell'essere.

In questa prospettiva è forse più facile capire allora la problematicità di fondo insita nella traduzione del *Pasticciaccio*, data appunto "la molteplicità dialettale gaddiana" (90), giustamente evidenziata nelle pagine di Josep Juliá Ballbé, oppure spiegarsi la difficoltà di ricezione dell'opera di Gadda nelle regioni di lingua tedesca o in quelle di lingua francese di cui parlano rispettivamente nei loro interventi Andreas Altenhoff e Jean Paul Manganaro. Anche Diego Zancani denuncia nel suo saggio una situazione quanto meno "difficile" per quanto concerne la fortuna dell'autore sia in Gran Bretagna che negli Stati Uniti, mentre Anna Maria Epifani definisce senza esitazioni Gadda "scrittore non avvicinabile, poco accessibile ai più" (154) e quindi "straniero" anche nella scuola italiana.

Si ripropongono quindi in queste pagine, attraverso l'analisi attenta e suggestiva svolta dai numerosi interventi — di cui non mi è possibile per ovvie ragioni di spazio elaborare le singole intuizioni critiche ma che si presentano in ogni caso ricchi di interessanti suggerimenti e proposte di ricerca — quelle che sono le tematiche portanti che hanno caratterizzato la tradizione critica gaddiana. Se si parla spesso di un Gadda "barocco" e dell'"incompiutezza necessaria" (120) della sua opera è proprio perché, come osserva giustamente Giuditta Podestà, "il ritmo aperto a carattere paradossale connota il barocco in contrapposto alle strutture chiuse, in sé perfette e armoniche, che corrispondono allo stile classico" (168).

Gadda dunque visse in maniera conflittuale e drammatica il suo confronto col reale ed è per questo che il "non finito" della sua poetica se da un lato riflette la presa di coscienza dolorosa di una frammentarietà inevitabile dell'oggetto, trova però, allo stesso tempo, nella satira sofferta della scrittura, la volontà disperata e caparbia del soggetto di cercare nel rapporto umano con "l'altro" un ordine universale e fuori dal tempo.

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Carol Lazzaro-Weis. *From Margins to Mainstream: Feminism and Fictional Modes in Italian Women's Writing, 1968-1990*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1993. Pp. 223.

Carol Lazzaro-Weis' *From Margins to Mainstream* is a comprehensive, theoretically sophisticated and valuable study of the intersection of feminist theory and contemporary Italian women's writing. Lazzaro-Weis focuses in particular on the relationship between generic structures and the fiction of Italian women writers. The author points out in the introduction that Italian feminists of the sixties and seventies at first rejected the concept of genre as the domain of a male-centered literary criticism. More recently women writers have come to exploit generic traditions common to male authors. In particular Italian women writers have turned to the romance, the *Bildungsroman*, the historical novel, and detective fiction. Lazzaro-Weis devotes a chapter to each of these genres. She demonstrates that women writers do not use the traditional generic forms to tell the same stories as men but exploit

these forms to "express their gendered viewpoints on the form's inherent themes" (xvi). The readings of women writers' use and exploitation of generic structures are preceded by two theoretical chapters. These give a general overview of feminist debates in the United States, France and Italy.

In Chapter One the author provides a critical overview of feminist debates over the role of experience, the subject's agency, the relationship between feminism and deconstruction, and the issue of what is "salvageable" of deconstruction from a feminist perspective. At the end of the chapter the author considers the relationship between literary structure and writing by women. The ease with which the author passes from Kristeva to Irigaray, from Muraro to De Lauretis, from Culler to Lentricchia, is impressive and at the same time dizzying. Towards the end of this chapter I began to question the relationship between the theoretical debates under discussion and the Italian women writers to be studied. Indeed, I was happy to discover that in Chapters Three through Six many of these theoretical questions are integrated into the close readings of individual writers.

In "Separatism in Literature and Politics," Lazzaro-Weis returns to one of the most crucial questions addressed by feminist theorists: whether the feminist project is to integrate women's writing into the literary canon or rather to assert its status as "separate but equal." The author draws upon American and Italian feminist theory to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the two strategies in the case of Italian women writers. She distinguishes between the consequences of separatism in the publishing sphere and in the domain of literary criticism. Lazzaro-Weis correctly observes the possible dangers of fighting for a more inclusive canon, an approach which "still reinforces the image of the woman writer as the unseen, self-sacrificing collaborator in a predominantly male enterprise" (36). The discussion of literary separatism is followed by a historic overview of Italian feminism and its distinguishing characteristics. The author cites the "pragmatic relationship of theory and practice," the questioning of the juridical concept of emancipation, and the debt to liberation theology as characteristic features of Italian feminism. I found the discussion of the practice of *affidamento* or entrustment to a symbolic mother to be particularly useful. The author is sensitive to the power of *affidamento* at the same time that she recognizes the inherent danger of a practice that may empower the (symbolic) mother while it disempowers the daughter.

In Chapter Three the author shows how romances by Italian women writers exhibit a disjunction between the characters' ideas and their actions. "The romance convention of hidden mediators forces the protagonists to deal with questions of how to contend with differences among women" (89). The author relates this convention and its feminist manifestations to Italian theories on sexual difference and *affidamento*. In Chapter Four Lazzaro-Weis points out that the female *Bildungsroman* has been perceived by feminist critics as less restrictive and more open to reinterpretation along feminist lines. Feminist studies have shown how the female *Bildungsroman* rejects the genre's characteristic message of accommodation to society. Lazzaro-Weis proceeds to situate Bompiani's *Mondanità*, Lilli's *Zeta o le zie* and Di Maggio's *C'era una volta un re* in the context of feminist reinterpretations of growing up female in Italy. Occasionally there is a suggestion that the novels under discussion are somewhat mechanical dramatizations of feminist theory. On the whole, however, Lazzaro-Weis convinces the reader that the texts in question are

informed by feminist theory without becoming dogmatic.

In the final chapter the author focuses on one of the literary genres to which Italian women writers are turning with increasing frequency: the historical novel. The author directly links the recourse to the historical novel genre to increased emphasis on women's history in Italy during the eighties and to the enthusiastic reception of the projects of such historians as Joan Kelley, Joan Scott and Natalie Zemon-Davis. The chapter centers on how differing representations of history, destiny and causality have shaped narrative responses to the changing Italian literary, philosophical and social context. Lazzaro-Weis shows how Manzoni's concern with the historical novel genre and his rejection of "any synthesis of historical and poetic truth" (125) is countered by Italian women writers. Writers like Morante, Bellonci and Banti "see history as a humanly made tyrannical force which can only be displaced through the affirmation of a poetic imagination" (133).

Carol Lazzaro-Weis' *From Margins to Mainstream* is an extremely informative and perceptive work. This study, together with Santo Arico's *Contemporary Women Writers in Italy*, has convinced me of the advantage of theorizing Italian women's writing in a category of its own. Lazzaro-Weis convincingly demonstrates that Italian women writers have appropriated the generic structures of a male-dominated literary tradition and turned them effectively to their own purposes.

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Italiana IV. Literature and Society. Ed. Albert N. Mancini, Paolo Giordano, and Enrico Pozzi. West Lafayette, IN: Bordighera Inc., 1992.

Dopo aver dominato la scena critica per decenni, gli studi socio-letterari hanno ceduto via via il passo ad altre metodologie e approcci ermeneutici, fino ad essere quasi relegati ad un ruolo minore rispetto al crescente interesse per criteri tesi ad analizzare l'opera letteraria non necessariamente in diretta relazione con il contesto storico-sociologico. Questo processo di riduzione di un campo di studi che, a tratti, era parso forse l'unico metodo attuabile nel panorama critico italiano, è certamente da collegarsi anche al fatto che il connubio fra sociologia e letteratura, in Italia, era stato spesso collegato più ad un'ideologia socio-politica che non ad un metro meramente socio-culturale che comprendesse anche la prima, senza però esserne totalmente condizionato dalle inevitabili crisi ideologiche dovute ai vari ripensamenti politici seguiti ai mutamenti sociali ed economici degli ultimi vent'anni. Se in Italia ed in Europa in genere la lezione socio-letteraria è tuttavia sempre restata attiva e dinamica per quantità e qualità, negli Stati Uniti, ove il mondo accademico per sua stessa struttura è aperto a soluzioni nuove e dinamiche, il calo d'interesse è stato forse più vistoso, e le tematiche e le modalità sociologiche sono state incanalate più verso altre discipline (la linguistica, ad esempio) che non verso la letteratura. Al tempo stesso, non sorprende che, in virtù di un maggior distacco e di una minore partecipazione emotiva ai problemi ideologici che intrecciano sociologia e letteratura, in questi ultimi tempi provengano proprio dagli Stati Uniti iniziative di rilancio di un tale metodo critico, ormai emancipato dalle polemiche degli anni '50-

60.

Frutto di una di queste operazioni è senz'altro quella che ha spinto alcuni studiosi nord-americani e italiani a riunire, con il titolo di *Literature and Society*, i saggi che compongono il quarto numero di *Italiana*. Questi interventi, dieci in tutto, attraversano un arco cronologico che dal Rinascimento arriva ai giorni nostri e offrono, in chiusura, tre proposte pertinenti alla sociologia in quanto tale: le prime due, di Enrico Pozzi e Consuelo Corradi, più teoriche; l'altra, di Vincenzo Padiglione, atta a sondare nel vivo dell'opera di un autore (Rocco Scotellaro) la funzionalità dell'apparato teorico. Data la loro natura specialistica, penso valga la pena partire proprio da questi ultimi scritti, in particolare da quello di Pozzi, il quale, sotto il titolo di "Retoriche della sociologia", rimeditando sull'attuale crisi della disciplina, ricorda come questa crisi abbia aperto la strada per ribaltare i termini del rapporto fra sociologia e letteratura. Dalla "sociologia del testo letterario" si è passati, in questi ultimi anni, a considerare il "testo sociologico come 'letteratura'", così che la sociologia della letteratura finisce per assumere "la sociologia stessa come 'testo' da scandagliare attraverso l'uso combinato degli strumenti della sociologia e della 'critica' letteraria" (163-64). Questo fa sì che lo stile "intersoggettivo", scientificamente neutro (peraltro anch'esso, proprio per la sua riconoscibile specificità, portatore di tropi retorici), si cominci a contraddistinguere per variazioni e contaminazioni stilistiche prima improponibili. Uno slittamento che, come nota acutamente Pozzi, è esso stesso indice della crisi di una disciplina che, attraverso la propria "perdita di centro stilistica ed epistemologica", manifesta con dolorosa consapevolezza l'inevitabile "perdita di centro delle nostre società" (174).

Condividendo le tesi sostenute da Pozzi, Consuelo Corradi, nel saggio "L'argomentazione del ragionamento scientifico: Emile Durkheim", ribadisce come solo ad una lettura superficiale la scrittura sociologica si delinea su un piano tendenzialmente univoco. La studiosa, nel rileggere un classico della sociologia come *Le Suicide* di Durkheim, ne individua un modello da seguire non tanto per le superate conclusioni scientifiche, quanto per l'originalità con cui Durkheim è riuscito a combinare le tre dimensioni proprie della ricerca sociale: la dimensione retorica che inventa e argomenta i quadri concettuali, la dimensione logica che li sottopone a convalida empirica e la dimensione teorica che formula proposizioni generali (193). Di qui la conseguente proposta che alle strutture argomentative indispensabili alla saggistica sociologica, si affianchino — e come parte essenziale della metodologia — anche le figure e i processi retorici necessari ad evidenziare e a comprovare le tesi ipotizzate.

Dall'analisi di un testo sociologico si passa all'interpretazione dell'opera e del sistema di uno scrittore/ricercatore quale Scotellaro, "un antropologo, diremmo oggi" (197), come asserisce Padiglione nel suo "Osservatore e osservato: problemi di conoscenza e rappresentazione. La vicenda Scotellaro". Padiglione mette in rilievo come la ricerca di Scotellaro, basata su un genuino intreccio di solidarietà di classe, di lavoro intellettuale e di impegno etico, s'imperi su un metodo esistenziale in costante e cosciente bilico fra scienza sociale e letteratura, fra coinvolgimento biografico (ed emotivo) e ricerca oggettiva. Un metodo ed una filosofia di vita e di lavoro messe a confronto con altri intellettuali alle prese con il mondo contadino, su tutti Carlo Levi, al quale — come allo stesso Scotellaro — sfuggirebbe "il nuovo nesso sociale che unisce operai e contadini" (218), ma dal quale Scotellaro si

distanza per la creazione di un "metacodice" che mira a colmare il tradizionale *gap* comunicativo fra la cultura d'élite e la subalterna cultura meridionale.

A queste analisi più tipicamente sociologiche, fanno da battistrada una serie di interpretazioni critiche aperte da uno studio su "Gioco e conversazione nella società rinascimentale" di Emilio Speciale. Attraverso una convincente analisi di testi-chiave (*Decameron*, *Cortegiano*, il *Gonzaga secondo* di Tasso e altri scritti del secolo XVI), Speciale, forte dell'esempio di saggi classici sull'argomento quali quelli di Huizinga e di Caillois, tratteggia l'importanza socio-culturale nelle sue varie dimensioni pedagogiche (il gioco come regole della conversazione o come stimolo agonistico) e antropologiche (il gioco come specchio di vita individuale e pubblico) per l'alta società rinascimentale. Ma non si pensi che l'intera società cinquecentesca possa giudicarsi alla luce del suo amore per l'aspetto ludico della vita: Speciale, infatti, conclude la sua carrellata con un trattato anonimo del 1768 in cui il gioco è illuministicamente criticato come un futile passatempo proprio delle classi aristocratiche.

Dal Rinascimento e dalle discussioni sul gioco si passa a rivalutare il ruolo della satira nella poesia secentesca ("La poesia senza pubblico. Teoria, scrittura e diffusione della satira nel primo Seicento") in un saggio in cui Antonio Corsaro giustamente rivendica la vivacità della cultura del secolo XVII, soffermandosi su due correnti satiriche operanti a Roma e a Firenze. Due scuole stilisticamente distinte, ma di cui Corsaro rimarca i notevoli tratti in comune e, soprattutto, lo stretto contatto politico e culturale, ben maggiore di quanto si sia pensato in passato. Lo studio di Franco Manai ("Letteratura e ideologia: dai contadini di Nieve ai paesani di Capuana") è dedicato al lento processo di maturazione ideologica e culturale della letteratura ottocentesca rispetto alle classi contadine. Manai mostra come dalle considerazioni teoriche di Nieve, che denuncia l'ipocrita ed utopica popolarità dei prodotti letterari consumati solo dai ceti alti (forse riprendendo ed accentuando in chiave socialmente più avanzata uno spunto già del Manzoni giovane; si veda, ad esempio, la lettera del 9 febbraio 1806 al Fauriel), si approdi con Capuana ad una rappresentazione del mondo campagnolo finalmente scevro sia del sentimentalismo rusticano che del compiacimento satiresco presenti nella letteratura romantica.

Sempre alla fine dell'800 si verifica un altro fondamentale mutamento socio-culturale: l'emergere di una letteratura e di un pubblico femminile. Un fenomeno che, come sottolinea Anna Santoro ("Narrativa di fine Ottocento: le scrittrici e il pubblico"), pur restando nei confini di una letteratura tradizionale e pur accettando i dettami di una cultura ostile e spesso misogina, è certo servito a sensibilizzare l'opinione pubblica (cioè del pubblico) nei confronti del punto di vista femminile, anche e, forse, soprattutto in virtù della realistica concretezza dei soggetti di molti di questi romanzi.

Proiettati nell'era contemporanea gli interventi di Mark Pietralunga e di Maria Carla Papini. Pietralunga ("The Emotional Deterioration of an Ordinary Man: Luciano Bianciardi and the 'Miracle' Years in Milan") percorrono l'opera di Bianciardi in prospettiva sociologica, ribadendo come lo scrittore maremmano sia stato uno dei primi (e pochi) autori che, a partire dalla *Vita agra* (1962), si sia opposto con veemenza alla massificazione culturale seguita al boom economico. Una massificazione e mercificazione cui, come ben documentato nel saggio, non resta estraneo neppure lo stesso intellettuale che, titanicamente, vi si oppone. Ad un altro

scrittore attento e sensibile al mondo del potere economico, Paolo Volponi, è rivolto il saggio della Papini ("Le mort saisit le vif: a proposito di *Le mosche del capitale* di Paolo Volponi"). Partendo dall'individuazione di una duplice fonte Foucault-Borges, cui Volponi pare essersi ispirato sin dal titolo, la studiosa svolge una fine analisi del romanzo che è visto come una specie di *summa* del conflittuale rapporto fra Volponi (per anni, come si sa, dirigente dell'Olivetti) e le alte sfere dell'industria. Chiamando in causa altri lavori dello scrittore e con un occhio alla chiara traccia autobiografica che si profila nel romanzo (o "non-romanzo", strutturato "senza trama né personaggi né protagonisti" per significare l'assoluta impossibilità di modificare il sistema sociale che "regge la logica e il meccanismo del potere" 155), la Papini mette in luce il disperato messaggio di Volponi per cui, "proprio come animali, gli uomini insensatamente si agitano, tragici insetti intorno ai rifiuti della loro perduta umanità, mosche, appunto, *Le mosche del capitale*" (161).

Se si è lasciato per ultimo il saggio con cui Remo Ceserani discute del traumatico ma prolifico rapporto fra le "Trasformazioni sociali della modernità e l'immaginario", prendendo ad esempio l'impatto del treno nella civiltà ottocentesca, è per la natura comparatistica e teorica di questo intervento che riassume le tesi esposte in un libro, *Treni di carta*, edito nel 1992 dalla Marietti. Soffermandosi su concisi ma significativi esempi di come l'irruzione del treno abbia modificato e/o sconvolto la visione intellettuale di primo ottocento, Ceserani dimostra come il treno, da strumento di modernità tecnologica, diventi uno strumento di modernità letteraria, favorendo, con la sua straniante velocità, i primi accenni di monologo interiore, come constatato nel caso di *Dombey and Son* di Dickens. Interessante, inoltre, la breve disanima delle varie metafore e tematiche suscitate dall'impatto fra treno e letteratura (e arte), un'analisi che va ben oltre la pura indicazione di massima, per configurarsi come una direttiva metodologica nell'invito a tener presente gli elementi strutturali del treno come parte dell'analisi critica, là dove esso sia funzionale al racconto. A questo proposito va ricordata l'acuta osservazione che il Ceserani svolge sulla costituzione del treno come proiezione antropologica della normale vita stanziale di tutti i giorni (73-74).

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Millicent Marcus. *Filmmaking by the Book: Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993. xiv + 313.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the study of film adaptation was dominated by literary critics who approached film as if it were just another narrative medium. Not surprisingly, academic studies in this vein tended to privilege the literary source over the filmic text and to deal primarily with the question of the film's "faithfulness" to the literary "original." While many journalists continue to reflect this traditional approach in their film reviews, the academic study of film has become more sophisticated. The remarkable proliferation of film studies in recent decades has contributed to a more precise critical vocabulary and has required that academic critics

who deal with film become fluent in a wide range of theoretical and critical discourses.

Reflecting the maturation of critical approaches to film adaptation and contributing to its further sophistication, Millicent Marcus's *Filmmaking by the Book* provides a series of stimulating "close readings" and highly perceptive visual analyses of ten postwar Italian films, two films by each of the following auteurs: Visconti, De Sica, Pasolini, the Taviani brothers, and Fellini. All ten of the films discussed stem from narrative works and in one way or another foreground their relationship to a literary antecedent. The individual films receive an extensive critical treatment, which, in many if not all instances, is further enriched by Marcus's considerable knowledge and deft syntheses of the germane literary criticism. Moving across a wide terrain that encompasses film scholarship, film theory, literary criticism and even North American film journalism, Marcus offers valuable insights into the films under consideration. She surrounds each neorealist and post-neorealist text with a remarkable wealth of information. Most importantly, she deepens our understanding of the films and the filmmakers through her ability to bring to the surface the varied forces at play in the complex process of film adaptation.

Filmmaking by the Book opens with an introduction that seeks to "negotiate the terms" informing current discussion on film adaptation, which, in the past decade, has moved beyond the traditional restrictive parameters of "fidelity analysis." Because the readings that follow are organized into chapters that treat each film individually as a *separate* instance of the encounter between film and literature, Marcus does well to provide an introduction that establishes the rationale for a book consisting of what might be considered disparate elements. The introduction surveys the historical development of Italian film and literary interactions and summarizes the theoretical problems surrounding adaptation. Marcus deserves praise for her clear synthesis of the theoretical and critical strains that have "rescued adaptation study from the reductiveness of fidelity analysis by providing vocabularies devoid of any built-in preference for one medium over another" (24). The theoretical part of the introduction moves convincingly toward Marcus's own approach, which privileges "the concrete level of cinematic practice with each adaptive encounter" (24). Here and throughout the chapters that follow, Marcus demonstrates a thorough familiarity with current theoretical concerns as well as the ability to apply them fruitfully to individual texts.

While the theoretical component of the introduction prepares the ground for Marcus's own eclectic approach to film adaptation, the historical aspects of film adaptation alluded to in the introduction remain underdeveloped, for the most part, in the discussions that follow. The author's assertion that the book deals with "the way in which adaptation operates within the evolving context of Italian film culture as a whole, and within the context of an individual filmmaker" (3) raises expectations of a more thorough analysis of the historical dimensions of Italian film adaptation. Marcus recounts the reception of each film, situates the films within an historical context, and analyzes the individual filmmaker's pronouncements and practice regarding adaptation. She does not, however, gather her findings into a broader pattern. While the author may indeed be right to warn of the danger of "replacing fidelity analysis with a single theory," this reader would have welcomed a conclusion that would have reflected upon and drawn together the critical insights of the preceding chapters. By the same token, *Filmmaking by the Book* does not attempt to

compare and contrast the five filmmakers with each other and does not seek to link the individual chapters. In fact, Marcus states at the outset her preference for "seeing how adaptation works *within* the corpus of an individual filmmaker's production" (x). She is persuasive when she points out that adaptive strategies will vary greatly even within the career of an individual filmmaker. Given her emphasis on difference and discontinuity, however, as well as her understandable reluctance to construct "an abstract model for literature-film comparisons" (x), it is not surprising that she falls short of achieving her stated goal of treating "adaptation . . . within the evolving context of Italian film culture as a whole" (3). Rushing to her defense, however, I hasten to add that the lack of a conclusion, and the absence of an overarching narrative tracing the historical development of film adaptation in the postwar period may be more indicative of present lacunae in Italian film scholarship than a failing on her part. Mindful of the paucity of historical criticism dealing with adaptation, it may be unfair to expect any individual scholar to draw broad conclusions. In any case, Marcus has taken us farther with regard to adaptation in postwar Italian cinema than anyone previously and we can appreciate the considerable merits of this work as it stands.

It might also be argued that while the auteurs chosen for inclusion are indeed, in some sense, "exemplary postwar Italian filmmakers," not all of the films treated are exemplary postwar Italian films. De Sica's *La ciociara* (*Two Women*), for example, as well as his *Giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, are not among his best or most memorable films, at least in my estimation. They are, however, available for screening in this country, lend themselves very well to a discussion of adaptation, and consequently are perhaps frequently taught in Italian film courses. My point is not to denigrate these two films by De Sica nor am I unappreciative of Marcus's engaging interpretations of these particular works. Rather, I wish to observe in closing that while film scholars may question the focus on certain films rather than on others, and may remain desirous of a more ambitious study with greater historical breadth, the high quality of Marcus's critical performance renders such questions moot in the final analysis. *Filmmaking by the Book* is a welcome addition to the study of film adaptation, constitutes a decisive step forward in Italian film scholarship, and provides a convenient tool for classroom use.

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Dana Gioia. *Can Poetry Matter? Essays on Poetry and American Culture*. Saint Paul: Greywolf Press, 1992. Pp. xiii and 258.

Walt Whitman, writing his essay "Democratic Vistas" in the opening decade of the Gilded Age of U.S. culture, asked why, in the United States of 1871 circulating "rivers and oceans of very readable print, journals, magazines, novels, literary books, 'poetry,' etc.," his nation could accurately be said at the time of his essay to "possess no literature at all."

The answer to Whitman was plain: the failure after the Civil War of American poets to meld aesthetically the conscious of the individual literary artist with the

collective unconscious of the national audience. "The problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious," Whitman wrote, "and it is finally to be met by literature." This future consummation within U.S. poetry was devotedly to be wished, Whitman declared. "The priest departs, the divine literatus comes."

Now, after nearly a century and a quarter of published U.S. verse since the issuance of "Democratic Vistas," Dana Gioia asks: What priest? and what communicants? Whether the creation and enjoyment of serious poetry can survive in the late twentieth-century America only among the "specialized minority readership that now sustains poetry as a highly sophisticated verbal game or secular religion" (40) is the crux on which Gioia hangs his questioning title. In answering this question, Gioia specifically examines in separate chapters the accomplishments of sixteen U.S. and Canadian poets, a majority of whom were first published in the decades following World War Two.

In Gioia's judgment, published poetry in the U.S., in the post-war decades composed largely by professional teachers of creative writing, has become "just another profession where the important issues are jobs, reputations, classroom hours, and promotions" (65). Not only has U.S. poetry become credentialed; worse, in Gioia's judgment, it has become compartmentalized in its audience. Just as God has long ago departed most late twentieth-century U.S. poetry, so too has the substantial audience of "the general reader on whom both Samuel Johnson and Virginia Woolf felt the vitality of literature depended — the intelligent, engaged non-specialist" (xii).

Gioia enumerates the resulting paradox. Despite the unprecedented multiplication of degree-granting creative writing programs across U.S. colleges and universities producing an estimated 20,000 newly credentialed poets by the turn of the century; despite the millions of U.S. dollars in public and private grants endowed to support individual poets and small literary presses; despite the average total of about one thousand new titles of poetry published in the U.S. each year (Whitman's "rivers and oceans of very readable print") fewer Americans each year are giving any serious attention to poetry (1-2, 6-7, 10). Poetry in the U.S. does seem fated to become by the end of this century just another cult of a dying Apollo, worshipped mainly by the hierophants of the Associated Writing Programs — a few, like the PBS poetaster Robert Bly, with at least one eye open for a chance to become a media celebrity.

Yet it is impossible to become the first member of an American working-class family to have published books nationally or to have achieved substantial success in business — and Gioia has done both — without participating at least to some extent in the Whitmanesque optimism of an America where most small towns still possess excellent free libraries and the reward of individual effort is at least believed to be still possible. Gioia shares partially in Whitman's optimism that in the U.S. great poets and great audiences ("great" in the sense of both popular and sublime) will inevitably find one another. In two of the sixteen essays treating individual poets, Gioia praises at length Weldon Kees and Ted Kooser, both of whom will perhaps achieve the larger audience Gioia believes they deserve; and in a long essay "Notes on the New Formalism" preceding the individual studies, Gioia also finds much to praise in this young generation of formalists, who, in revising meter, rhyme, and narrative within their poems, "reject the specialization and intellectualization of the arts in the

academy over the past forty years and affirm the need for a broader popular audience" (40).

The New Formalists are to Gioia the distant descendants from "a time, so different from our specialized modern era, where there was little, if any, distinction among poetry, religion, history, music, and magic." In that meter-rich, pre-glyphic era, "[t]rained poet-singers took the events and ideas a culture wanted to preserve—tribal histories, magic ceremonies — formulated them into meter, and committed these formulas to memory. Before writing, the poet and the poem were inseparable, and both represented the collective memory of their culture" (33).

This is heavy rhetoric to place on the slender poetic shoulders of such currently celebrated New Formalists as Brad Leithauser, of whom a representative poem is a recounting of his prowess at teaching tennis to suburban housewives ("Two Summer Jobs"); or on Marilyn Hacker, who published rhymed verse on the difficulties of traveling in France or sustaining a love affair while remaining a single parent: "What does a girl do / but walk across the world, her kid in tow. . . ."

This self-indulgent voice also expressed in print by many other New Formalists keeps them rhetorically from assuming the vatic power which Gioia wishes for them, and which earlier formalist poets in some works possessed. Although Gioia elliptically distinguishes the New Formalists from earlier U.S. formalist poets (40, 100-01), he ignores the absence in New Formalist verse of what Allen Tate isolated as the "tension" of poetics. This absence of tension, which is occasioned by the necessity of forcing an idiosyncratic vision into the accepted and received forms of one's culture, perhaps explains the New Formalists' lack of skill in handling impure rhymes, hovering accents, and sprung meter. All are exigencies of the individual poet attempting to place a personal vision into an objective form; the successful poem resulting from this tension is both a part of, and apart from, the society into which it comes to life, even as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* gains its tensile strength both from the desires of Whitman's individual libido and his more public desire to become a great prophetic voice in nineteenth-century America.

By contrast, New Formalism, anecdotal and personal in content, too often settles rhetorically for a pointless sight-rhyme or a lax enjambment of the pentameter, both shown in the excerpt above from Marilyn Hacker's "Mythology." Despite the promise Gioia sees in New Formalism to revive poetic skill as an expression of the literary and the communal consciousness, Gioia concedes that "[s]ince 1960, the only new verse forms to have entered the mainstream of American poetry have been two miniatures: the double dactyl and the ghazal, the latter usually in a dilute unrhymed version of the Persian original" (37). Neither lends itself to trained poet singers attempting to preserve tribal memories.

But however one may disagree with Gioia's conclusions, he has the virtue of stating his important question passionately and consistently. His arguments are wonderfully clear of cant or academic toadying; and at a time when many prominent critics of literature profess not to be able to define "poetry" at all, he persistently asks why we are less sure of our judgment than were Tasso or Lucretius. We live, like Tasso or Lucretius, in an age of flux; and perhaps the most virtuous critic is not the one who remains true to an answer, but, like Dana Gioia, remains true to his question.

Franco Ferrucci. *Nuovo discorso sugli italiani. Con il Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degl'italiani di Giacomo Leopardi.* Milano: Mondadori, 1993.

In this dual volume Ferrucci's "New Discourse on the Italians" precedes Leopardi's "Discourse on the Present State of Italian Customs," a work whose pessimism and sense of moral challenge it shares. Leopardi's text (usually dated 1824, though Ferrucci allows for a later composition) includes the extensive marginalia (in italics) and Ferrucci's many footnotes.

Leopardi in his mid-twenties harbored strong feelings about his countrymen. The theory of customs he developed was based on observed forms of social discourse in the Italy he knew; he had not yet been to Naples, Venice, or even Milan where his ideas about Romanticism were circulating. After the Congress of Vienna and in response to Madame De Stael's essay, the interest in other European literatures and cultures had been raised. Yet, writes Leopardi, Italians continued to write and speak of themselves in unflattering terms, though foreigners generally did the opposite. The author of the patriotic "All'Italia" has already turned against the idea of national unity (though prudently he did not excise the early poem from his *Canti*).

According to Leopardi, Italy lacks genuine "society" and "conversation"; "opinion" seems alive only insofar as it is performance, voluble and unreliable: in specific, the scoffing insult (*dileggio*) and verbal fencing of which Italians are the masters. Rather than respecting other person's self-love and self-respect, in Italy the most important conversational talent is the ability to show "scorn towards others, to offend as much as possible their self-love" (127). The abysmal state of Italian society, and therefore Italian "life" and "action" in the 1820s, leads Leopardi to conclude that, in order to confront the maximum evil, which is indifference, reason dictates that one adopt a "un pieno e continuo cinismo d'animo, di pensiero, di carattere, di costumi d'opinione, di parole e d'azioni" (122). At the same time Leopardi denounces the cynicism required in Italy, the art of insult and mutual derision: "Il *persiflage* degli altri è certamente molto più fino, il nostro ha spesso e per lo più del grossolano . . . ma con tutto questo io compiangerei quello straniero che venisse a competenza e battaglia con un italiano in genere di *raillerie*" (126).

Though the term *persiflage* might suggest the positive value of teasing to pressure an individual to recognize his error for the sake of the common good, Leopardi intends only its negative value of a derision by which the mocker seeks to cover his own defects and inferiority complex. He sees its institutionalization in Italy as resulting in a culture of egotism and misanthropy, and an unending cycle of damage and falseness. Though these problems are universally human, due to its customs Italy — led in this by its upper class — is the most cynical of nations. The fact that Leopardi's argumentation of this theory is often contradictory is due, says Ferrucci, to his youth, to the emotional charge behind his opinions, his rancor against Recanati and the reality of his isolation. (As Leopardi notes, though solitude is necessary for overcoming boredom and nurturing the imagination (152), it is also socially harmful [102].) The often paradoxical conclusions on the Italian character derive from Leopardi's reasoned rejection of the modern tendency to depend on

reason, vis-à-vis the ancient predilection for nature, feeling and instinct.

Leopardi's materialist philosophy of sensism is consistent throughout the essay, though, as Ferrucci is careful to note, his debts to "enlightenment" thinking do waver when it comes to his theory of illusion, and his defense of the "ancients," who had not yet abandoned imitation of nature, vis-à-vis the "moderns" overburdened by thought, reason, and self-imitation. In the Europe of the Restoration, viewed from an Italy which for Leopardi corresponded to the State of the Church, a fundamental distinction is drawn between northern and southern Europeans. The latter, due to their greater "warmth" and susceptibility to change, are more gravely affected by the onslaught of mechanical coldness of the modern world. By restricting "conversation" to the public space, the cafés and theaters, what results in Italy is "una pura e continua guerra senza tregua, senza trattati, e senza speranza di quartiere" (130). Though inconsequential in itself, the overall effect of this "war" is devastating to the national character and morale: catastrophe and national unhappiness infects the worlds of literature, journalism, theater, public and private conversation. Though egoism and misanthropy exist universally, Italy is the European nation with the most deprived of moral foundations.

Leopardi's essay contains its most meaningful points, says Ferrucci, in its discussion of mockery or insult, typical forms of interchange having their origin in a national lack of self-respect. Ferrucci's essay builds on several of Leopardi's ideas. It establishes at the outset that being Italian means acknowledging that things are different in Italy and that they break down due to disorganization and preventable human error. The Italian accepts this state of affairs ("così vanno le cose in Italia") with a display of chagrin, while not suffering overly. By doing so he expresses his love of country, a love ostensibly greater than that of other nationals. At the same time he escapes the inertia and entropy of civic life by being clever ("furbo"), by not being taken in. Those who suffer overly from the fault of inefficiency and chronic dissimulation are considered gullible and awkward by their compatriots (indeed the Anglo-Saxon concepts of honesty and truthfulness translate with difficulty). If one finds this position untenable, one is out of sync with the tendency to eschew "seriousness" for the sake of theater, to reject private conversation for the sake of the mask, to prefer a high-minded transformism, with its concomitants of derision and lying. In Italy a lie is to be read as a lie, and thus taken in good faith. The mockery and theater of daily life are thus signs of life in the national conscience.

After his introduction Ferrucci presents a foreshortened panorama of the literary tradition, and first of all the three *corone of the Trecento*. Dante is named as the initial figure of exile, who had the ability to "transmute a forced exile into a voluntary exile" (16) and began, with his invectives, the practice of speaking ill of Italy. Ferrucci accepts Dante's political views, interpreting them in the current context as a support of one world government that would effectively abolish war between nations. After Dante, Petrarch created the figure of the internal exile, whose destiny "è contrassegnato dalla solitudine a casa propria, dall'incomprensione degli altri, dalle mille difficoltà da cui ci si trova circondati, dal livore e dall'invidia dei mediocri" (18). Boccaccio in turn formed the figure of the "gran signore" or "VIP," a kind of intermediary between the common person and the powerful, as later found in Castiglione's *Courtier* and Machiavelli's *Prince*, itself essentially "the portrait of an actor" (33). (The 18th century saw the word "les italiens" become synonymous with

"actors.") During the counter-reformation one found the Jesuit phenomenon of "nicodemismo," "the art of lying for a good end" (30), a hypocritical embrace of procedure and theatrical-liturgical ritual. After the counter-reformation the Italians emerged listlessly as the guardians of the world's art, the curators of a dusty realm of the dead. Goldoni's *Arlecchino servitore di due padroni* provided us an attitudinal portrait of the reluctant Italian, a superficial liar who through his cleverness escapes the deceptions of others; Ferrucci ties this case to the lackluster spiritual character of Manzoni's Renzo and Lucia. The general sense of a diminished Italy sets in motion the nationalist reaction of the early 20th century, a kind of "collective therapy" (38) indebted to d'Annunzio, without whom Italy "maybe would not have entered into World War I" (37). This carries forward into the paroxysms of the fascist era. The same phenomenon is seen to exist in the current psychology of "pentitismo," a means of extolling oneself by accepting blame, traceable to the rite of confession: "È un'altra strategia di penitenza che curiosamente garantisce a chi vi è soggetto una forma di superiorità morale verso chi non ha commesso gli stessi errori" (61). The world of Italian soccer, said to evenly divide Sunday between Church and national consciousness, has become a kind of "shadow government" that provides the illusion of unity and "a continuity of tradition" (63) that the government itself is unable to provide. The third member of the emerging trinity is the television, a medium which in Italy is "hot" (not cool, as in McLuhan's theory) and in which the figure of the mediator come to life in an unprecedented way. Thus if the characteristic mode of Italian acting is a scoffing mockery in which the "local" prevails over the "universal" (65), soccer and television provide perfect venues for its realization: "l'arte di punirsi attraverso il divertimento" (67), "la pantomima della mediocrità" (69).

Ferrucci argues that in Italy, unlike in "advanced societies," "power" leads to a diminishment of social guarantees. He asks: Who, in the mind of the Italians, has the power? Answer: Those who ask the questions, and specifically the questions one is forced to answer. He notes how this power has transferred from the politicians to the journalists and the "investigators of crimes against the *cosa pubblica*" (23). In general, one may say, in Italy the "mask is in power" — Mussolini being the most obvious case in point. Fascism was the tragic conclusion to the Italian form of cynicism centered on ridicule in the public space, to the utter lack of private conversation denounced by Leopardi. The political face of this cynicism is transformism, a strategy of coopting one's foe's positions so as to disable him and remain in a position of advantage.

The positive value given to slyness, the contradictory love-hate feeling toward one's country, the isolationism and insistent localism, the ritual of deriding one's peers (and accepting the same from them), combines to form a complex of uneradicable customs, a *forma mentis* dependent on the "mask," on the duplicity of a mock communication that the foreigner finds hard to understand yet must accept as a coherent system. Ferrucci adopts Leopardi's idea that Italians do not "converse," besieged by a form of egoism, misanthropy and xenophobic privileging of their Italianness over their universal humanity. Curiously the university offers no protection but is a "un complesso labirintico di mediatori e di intermediari" (25), where one writes self-heroifying testaments of one's own exclusive, intricate, and solipsistic world. The dissipation of Italy's unique artistic patrimony is an even graver concern, evident in the irreversible physical degradation of artifacts,

monuments, and cities.

Ferrucci does, however, offer a ray of hope in conclusion. If and when the Italians stop reproving themselves by saying "così vanno le cose in Italia," the "reign of death" in which Italian culture has sunk may come to an end. To return to Leopardi: Though the sociological situation has changed "radically" from that he observed, his prophetic vision has been verified: the modern death through excess of reason has prevailed, also in Italy. Yet his view of the Italian genius, rooted in "immobilism" and resistance to the "chaotic development of modern societies" may still contain the seed of a moral recovery, suggests Ferrucci. If the Italians, who have been "forced to play bad parts" (78), are to regain the spiritual fullness of their patrimony they must find conviction in the roles they play, and convert their attitude from one of transformism, cynicism, and misanthropy to one of a steadfast and serious singularity of purpose, the risk of sincerity.

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Paolo Rossi. *Paragone degli ingegni moderni e postmoderni*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989.

Nel confronto tra gli antichi e i moderni è nato fin dall'umanesimo il mito della perfezione assoluta dell'antichità; a questo mito e alla venerazione per l'antichità da esso provocata si accompagna la paura del nuovo. L'abbandono delle sicurezze e delle guide e la stessa capacità di guardare il mondo con gli occhi sgombri da pregiudizi, scrive Rossi, appaiono legati alla rivoluzione scientifica. Si tende troppo spesso a dimenticare che se i moderni scoprirono un Nuovo Mondo, essi hanno anche visto la scomparsa di un altro mondo, quello che vedeva la Terra al centro dell'universo. Il cielo che per lunghi secoli appariva imperturbabile ai mutamenti in quanto sede del divino appare ai moderni come luogo di profonde trasformazioni e corruzioni. Il cosmo di Aristotele, di Agostino e di Dante scomparire per sempre per lasciare spazio a un mondo privo di centro, senza limiti nel tempo e nello spazio. È questo senso dell'infinito che spiega le nuove forme dall'architettura barocca, con la sua estetica dell'illimitato, che nella pittura si esprime con la rinuncia all'ordine armonico del quadro e nella poesia con l'irrompere di forme liberissime, metaforiche e polivalenti. La rivoluzione scientifica introdusse insomma, accanto al venir meno del mondo del pressapoco, anche la scomparsa delle certezze e delle spiegazioni totalizzanti, una visione più drammatica degli esseri umani. La mancanza di unità del sistema, la multipolarità del vero si esprime anche nella filosofia dell'età barocca per esempio in Giordano Bruno, con la sua viva e dinamica consapevolezza dell'infinito, o in Tommaso Campanella, nel cui pensiero coesistono diversi sistemi filosofici. Campanella è un esempio tipico di pensiero multipolare segno dell'inquietudine del tempo. Egli avverte la necessità di risolvere le contraddizioni tra lo spirito del Rinascimento e quello della nuova scienza pur senza riuscire nel suo intento. Il secolo barocco trova la sua più complessa espressione in un filosofo come Leibniz e si concluderà poi con Vico, che viene ricordato anche da Paolo Rossi. Ma anche in Vico si mantiene quella multipolarità sistematica che era tipica del barocco, così come

rimane in lui il senso del limite rappresentato dalla presenza della morte, uno dei temi favoriti dalla cultura barocca. Proprio in questi aspetti va ricercata la modernità di Vico che rappresenta un potente antidoto alla visione limitata e limitante che vede le radici della modernità nel solo illuminismo.

Tutto questo quadro delle conseguenze della rivoluzione scientifica che si manifestano ampiamente nel mondo barocco è esattamente l'opposto della stereotipa visione del mondo moderno introdotta dai teorici del postmoderno come Gianni Vattimo nel suo *La fine della modernità: nichilismo e ermeneutica nella cultura postmoderna* (Milano, Garzanti, 1985). Per Vattimo il moderno è il luogo delle certezze e delle "spiegazioni totalizzanti del mondo" e della "fede in una potenza sconfinata dell'uomo sulla natura" e della "fede nell'illimitato superamento degli ostacoli naturali" (48). Le caratteristiche del moderno sono fatte emergere da una supposta essenza della tecnica che svela i tratti propri della metafisica e dell'umanesimo: questo sarebbe il culmine e l'inizio della crisi dell'umanesimo, inteso come parte e aspetto della metafisica, che si esprime nella definizione dell'uomo come soggetto. Il soggetto, scrive Vattimo, è oltrepassato in quanto è un aspetto del pensiero che dimentica l'Essere a favore dell'oggettività e della semplice presenza. Per Paolo Rossi la visione dell'epoca moderna che emerge dalla pagine di Vattimo non vale molto di più di quella che si ritrova nelle immagini di un "Oscuro Medioevo" o di un "Luminoso Rinascimento". Si tratta di una visione in bianco e nero e di affermazioni che "sono a stento accettabili nella parte storica delle guide turistiche". È questa, insomma, la prospettiva di un "Piccolo Bignami" che proietta sull'intera modernità l'immagine di un positivismo di maniera (15.) L'accento di Rossi cade sull'ambivalenza del mondo moderno e di tutta la storia umana che sempre oscilla tra l'esaltazione e l'incertezza. In questo contesto la pubblicazione del *Sidereus Nuncius* di Galilei che rivelava al mondo l'esistenza di nuove stelle segna una svolta che agisce non solo nel senso di un'esaltazione della tecnica e delle possibilità umane nei confronti della natura, ma anche in quello, esattamente opposto, della fine di tutte le certezze su cui gli esseri umani avevano costruito fino a quel punto la loro esistenza. Questo appare evidente anche nella poesia di quel periodo, per esempio in *The First Anniversary* di John Donne.

Rossi critica la fondazione filosofica del postmodernismo nella sua versione heideggeriana. Da una parte egli mette in evidenza come la filosofia di Heidegger si sia trasformata in un discorso inattaccabile fondandosi sull'immagine del filosofo come "Pastore dell'essere", sulla separazione tra sacro e profano e fra "ontico" e "ontologico". In Heidegger può così venir meno il concetto di verità che in quanto auto-manifestazione dell'Essere può essere solo un orizzonte di senso privo di valore pratico o estetico. La derazionalizzazione della verità, sottratta al pensiero riflessivo e affidata al pensiero poetante o rimemorante, non produce secondo Rossi una verità *debole*, ma la scomparsa della nozione stessa di verità, e questo appare possibile solo in una visione, quale quella heideggeriana, fortemente elitaria ed aristocratica, inaccessibile al senso comune, fondata su di una concezione mitologica di un'originaria sapienza riposta e di un'inarrestabile decadenza storica nel mondo umano dominato dalla metafisica e dalla tecnica. Nei teorici contemporanei la postmodernità diventa il mondo della "fine della storia", della debolezza e della *pietas*, il mondo in cui la stessa filosofia diventa letteratura e si trasforma in estetica dal contorno autoconsolatorio. In realtà, il pensiero debole appare a Paolo Rossi una

“sottospecie dell’antiilluminismo forte”, privo di quella dignità filosofica che egli riconosce ad Heidegger. Quello che appariva come l’unico limite imputabile alla filosofia di Heidegger, e cioè l’aver affermato una inesistente essenza della modernità, diventa nei teorici contemporanei della postmodernità il punto di partenza e di arrivo, di un pensiero dell’immobilità che si esaurisce nelle cosiddette “diagnosi epocali”, inventandosi epoche unitarie, come la modernità, che non sono mai esistite. Allo stesso modo anche il “nichilismo” o la cosiddetta “ragione classica” che avrebbero dominato il mondo fino all’epoca postmoderna non sono altro che miti, o, per usare una terminologia cara ai postmoderni, “grandi narrazioni”, “spiegazioni totalizzanti del mondo” costruite da filosofi attraverso operazioni semplificatorie. Lo stesso Heidegger del resto non si è liberato completamente degli aspetti peggiori della tradizione metafisica che sperava di oltrepassare, anzi vi ha contribuito, sostituendo, come ha scritto Rorty, all’argomentazione filosofica l’apertura all’Essere e la ricerca del Sacro astratto dalla vita concreta (R. Rorty, *Conseguenze del pragmatismo*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1986, pp. 80-82). Il filosofo nell’heideggerismo viene così ad autoidentificarsi narcisisticamente come la figura oracolare capace di svolgere diagnosi epocali, riducendo in questo modo la filosofia al discorso e alla scrittura, dimenticando che la filosofia è prima di tutto *esercizio*, un esercizio connesso alla vita. La filosofia, come ha scritto recentemente Carlo Sini, se vuole continuare a essere tale mantenendo il carattere di *ethos politico* che le attribuiva Platone, senza confondersi con l’episteme enciclopedica o con il discorso poetico-letterario, non deve abbandonare il sapere storiografico e neppure l’abito tecnologico che fonda la nostra civiltà, ma esporsi alla domanda sul senso delle operazioni che costituiscono il nostro sapere. Del resto la stessa questione della verità non si risolve dicendo che ci sono molte verità, perché in questa maniera il problema della verità viene aggirato a favore di una passiva accettazione dell’esistente. L’ermeneutica contemporanea appare a Sini come una teorizzazione ideologica che non mantiene la radicalità della domanda filosofica sulla verità e si riduce ad una traduzione in chiave poetico-letteraria del pensiero filosofico. Detto in altri termini per Sini rimane necessario porre la questione del soggetto, che poi è la questione stessa della filosofia, recuperando in questo modo l’eredità di Husserl, cancellata da Heidegger. La conclusione di Paolo Rossi è in qualche modo analoga là ove ricorda, citando L. Ferry e A. Renaut (*Heidegger et les modernes*, Paris, Grasset, 1988), che l’antiumanesimo e la critica del mondo moderno inteso come “mucchio di macerie” sono incompatibili con il “minimo di soggettività” che rimane comunque necessaria perché resti possibile il pensiero democratico. Del resto, come ha scritto Agnes Heller, fino a quando continua la *fiction* della fine o dell’inizio di qualcosa la filosofia è viva e recalcitrante: “The narratives of the end of the subject are extremely strong statements about both personalities and subjects. In fact, the narrative encapsulate worlds according to those contemporary philosophers. They are subjects; moreover they are representative subjects. The less we want them to be representative subjects, the more they become one. Not even philosophers can jump over their own shadows” (A. Heller, “Death of the Subject?” *Can Modernity Survive?* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, p. 78).

Brief Notices

Edited by Massimo Maggiari, *College of Charleston*

Etica cristiana e scrittori del Novecento. Ed. F. M. Iannace. Stony Brook: Forum Italicum, 1993.

The following scholars contributed to this volume of essays: Ferdinando Alfonsi, "Il destino in Silone: da oscura forza a visione serena" (9-14); Carmine Di Biase, "Il cristiano in ricerca: Mario Pomilio critico e scrittore" (23-38); Giuseppe Di Scipio, "Religion and Death in *Il Gattopardo*: A Meditation Through Montaigne" (39-60); Cinzia Donatelli Noble, "Prospettive religiose in Cesare Pavese" (61-68); Mario Gabriele Giordano, "Il pessimismo cristiano di Mario Pomilio" (69-76); Florinda Iannace, "Scrittori cattolici e critica marxista" (77-92); Emanuele Licastro, "La quintessenza di Pirandello e Betti" (93-100); Franco Manescalchi, "Condizione esistenziale ed etica cristiana nell'opera di Margherita Guidacci" (101-104); Rosa Berti Sabbieti, "Ricordando Margherita Guidacci" (105-106); Margherita Guidacci, "Autoritratto critico" (107-114); Jean-Jacques Marchand, "Etica cristiana nella letteratura dell'emigrazione italiana in Svizzera" (115-129); Umberto Mariani, "Il motivo letterario del *Processo a Gesù*" (129-138); Gaetana Marrone, "The Staging of Cavani's Galileo: The Historiographer's Art" (139-146); Walter Mauro, "Dall'io al noi: la poesia di D. M. Turollo" (147-160); Maria Nicolai Paynter, "Il grande male e l'ostinazione della fede nella poesia di Turollo" (161-176); Carmelo Mezzasalma, "La religiosità nell'opera di Renzo Ricchi" (177-192); Mario Mignone, "L'*Allegria* ungarettiana come ricerca della parola sacrale" (193-202); Alfonso Procaccini, "Neo-Realism: Within and Beyond Ethics" (203-220); Riccardo Scrivano, "La Grazia e le Opere. Metamorfosi di un modello: Bernanos, Lisi, D'Arzo, Pomilio" (221-234); Bartolomeo Sorge, "*Altare vuoto* di Rodolfo Doni" (235-239).

Studi d'italianistica nell'Africa australe 6.2 (1993)

This issue contains the following articles: "L'Africa segreta di Massimo Bontempelli" by Fulvia Airoldi Namer (4-22); Pasolini's "Archaic Primitive": a Poetic Rebirth" by Kim Gardi (23-35); "Moravia — viaggiatore nella preistoria" by Jørn Moestrup (36-50); "Poesia e politica nell'Africa di Erminia Dell'Oro" by Grazia Sumeli Weinberg (51-70).

Franco-Italica 2 (1992)

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de Mandiargues et ses mystères d'Italie" by André-Alain Morello (49-70); "Yves Bonnefoy e l'Italia. Il pathos dell'interpretazione" by Giovannella Fusco Girard (71-78); "Yves Bonnefoy e l'Italia. Pothos e creatività" by Anna Maria Tango (79-90); "Cryptes et vergers: l'Italie de Jaccottet" by Aline Bergé (91-108); "Le Miroir de Milan: Aragon dans son 'Voyage d'Italie' by Olivier Barbarant (109-116); "L'Image de l'Italien dans les encyclopédies Larousse de 1861 à 1939" by Colette Berger-Capalbo (117-124).

Cuadernos de filología italiana 1 (1994)

The following scholars contributed to this volume of essays: V. Grasso, "In limine"; M. Gil Esteve "Presentación"; N. D. Arutiunova, "Metáfora: enfoque lingüístico"; M. C. Barrado, "Icono, índice, símbolo, en *La spada del sole (de Palomar)* de Italo Calvino"; V. Díaz-Corrales, "Función alegórica de una comparación de *La Divina Commedia*"; C. Ferruci, "Due sguardi dal cosmo: Pirandello e Leopardi"; G. Guidotti, "Lingua e persone nel *Marescalco* dell'Aretino"; C. López Cortezo, "Bases para una restauración del Canto V del *Inferno*"; M. Mazzoleni, "Concordanza ed effetti di senso in quattro tipi di periodo ipotetico: fra semantica e pragmatica"; N. Messina, "Due contributi alla lettura di Vincenzo Consolo tra ecdotica e *Quellenforschung*"; M. Muzzioli, "La demistificazione crepuscolare"; M. Rodríguez Fierro, "Lirica e narrativa in *Conversazione in Sicilia* di Elio Vittorini"; R. Scrimieri, "El péndulo de Foucault o los límites de la interpretación"; P. Valesio, "Zooma"; D. Alonso, "Il delitto di Gongora verso la poesia italiana"; J. Arce, "La lengua de Dante en la *Divina Comedia* y en sus traductores españoles"; A. Bocchini, "L'editoria italiana in risposta alla crescente domanda di lingua italiana e alla luce delle convenzioni per la certificazione".

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Founded forty-seven years ago, *Symposium* publishes essays dealing with modern foreign literatures. Volume 47:2 (1993), subtitled "Considerations on Italian Literature," contains the following essays: Augustus Pallotta, "*Symposium* Then and Now: The Italian Dimension"; Paolo Cherchi, "Onomastica e colori nel XX canto dell'*Adone*"; Gustavo Costa, "Ugo Foscolo's Europe: A Journey from the Sublime to the Romantic Humor"; Franco Ferrucci, "Leopardi e il mondo moderno"; Antonio Illiano, "From Gray's *Elegy* to Foscolo's *Carme*: Highlighting the Mediation and Sublimation of the 'Sepulchral'"; Albert N. Mancini, "Translation Theory and Practice in Seventeenth-Century Italy: The Case of the French Novel"; Olga Ragusa, "Literary Relations: France and Italy in the Late Nineteenth Century." Review by JoAnn Cannon: "Stefano Tani, *Il romanzo del ritorno. Dal romanzo medio degli anni sessanta alla giovane narrativa degli anni ottanta*. Bibliography by Augustus Pallotta: "Italian Subjects Published in *Symposium* since 1946.

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